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HAND-BOOKS FOR  
BIBLE CLASSES  
AND PRIVATE STUDENTS

ST JOHN'S GOSPEL  
*With Introduction and Notes*  
BY  
*Rev. George Reith D.D.*  
*CHAPS. VIII—END.*

T & T CLARK



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John, Gospel of St

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

# ST. JOHN,

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES.

PART II.

*CHAPTER VIII. VER. 12 TO XXI.*

BY

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COMMENTARY.



PART II.

CHAPTER VIII. VER. 12 TO XXI.



# THE GOSPEL BY JOHN.

## PART II.

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CHAP. VIII. 12. **T**HEN spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world : he that

### II. THE HISTORY OF CHRIST'S MANIFESTATION OF HIS GLORY AS THE ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON—*continued.*

12-59. These verses contain, perhaps, the continuation of Christ's discourses on the last day of the feast. The feast of Tabernacles recalled the life in the wilderness, with its two marks of God's special grace—the rock that gave water, and the pillar of cloud and fire that gave guidance. Jesus having already declared that He is the true, eternal source of satisfaction for human thirst, now identifies Himself with the true guiding Light. The occasion may have been the custom of lighting two brilliant lamps at the Temple, to commemorate and symbolize the pillar of fire. "Two colossal golden candlesticks . . . only on the first day . . . in the forecourt of the women" (Meyer). This was also where the "treasury" was, ver. 20. The divisions of the chapter are these—(1) 12-20. The witness Christ bears to Himself; (2) 21-30. Christ's Personality; (3) 31-end. Christ addresses those who professed faith in Him.

(1.) 12-20. The subject of these verses is, the witness borne by Jesus on behalf of Himself.

12. *I am the Light of the world*, Isa. ix. 2, xlii. 6; Luke ii. 32; Num. xxiv. 17. The emphasis being placed on the personal pronoun, Jesus contrasts Himself with all other lights; cp. i. 4 f. and 9. He is the light, not of Israel only, but of mankind. Divine Truth and purity are summed up in Him, ver. 45 f. There is the suggestion of the figure of the wilderness applied to the world—"wherein there is no way." Christ is the way, because He is the Light. We, though sinners, have access through Him to the Father by a new and living way which He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh. Without Him men are fugitives, wanderers, Cains. He is the complete Revelation of the will of God to man. He is the truth; without Him men are shrouded in darkness,—darkness of the intellect and darkness of the affections, Eph. iv. 17 ff.; Rom. i. 18 ff. But He has not merely given men truth, He has given them life. *He* is their life. "The life was the light of men." Life alone can be a light to life; and Christ's life is the ideal to which men's aspirations rise. The claim to be *personally* the light must be noted. This is one of those remarkable assertions of Christ about Himself commented on before, vi. 35.

- followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have  
 13 the light of life. The Pharisees therefore said unto him,  
 Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.  
 14 Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record  
 of myself, *yet* my record is true: for I know whence I  
 came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come,

The facts, that light comes from a source outside of and above ourselves; that it reveals darkness; that it awakens sympathy with itself,—are implied. *He that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness*, xii. 46. To have Christ as our light is to be a follower of Christ. In following Christ there is no uncertainty, and no perhaps. We know that "the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth," 1 John ii. 8. *In following Christ* we are possessed with this assurance. Until we follow we cannot know. *Walk*; see on vii. 1. *The darkness*, see i. 5. *Shall have the light of life*: shall not live in the ignorance of God and under the dominion of a will opposed to God; shall not wander away, or stumble, or lose himself; shall not follow any delusive leading of his own imagination or desire. Observe, the antithesis is so put as to express the *inner possession* of the light; and not simply, shall walk in the light, etc. Believers are themselves "light in the Lord," Eph. v. 8; hence their certainty of salvation (1 John iv. 10) through the indwelling Spirit of Christ. *The light of life*; cp. i. 4, "The life was the light." Either: the light which human life requires, or the light which is the true ideal life itself; probably the latter. Observe the three promises to believing men: ver. 12, light to walk by; vers. 31-36, freedom and dignity of sons; ver. 51, endless life.

13. The Pharisees reply that self-witness cannot be accepted. *Thou of thyself bearest witness*. It did not however follow that their conclusion was justified, *Thy witness is not true*. Perhaps they were reminding Him of His own previous utterance, v. 31, "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true;" see on that passage.

14-18. Christ reasons thus: His testimony of Himself is to be accepted, because—(1) His knowledge of Himself is adequate; and (2) His unity with the Father is perfect.

14. *Even if I bear witness of myself*, etc. Light is its own witness; but an eye capable of perception is necessary. The revelation of God in Christ commands itself to men by its own character and their need of it, and can have no external proof. To doubt or deny it argues lack of spiritual and moral vision or defect. The ground on which Christ claims truth for His witness of Himself is singular. *I know whence I came, and whither I go*, xiii. 3, xvi. 28. His own origin and destiny He knows; therefore also the origin and destiny of man. Hence He alone is the Light of men. Man's origin and destiny are clear in Christ, and clear nowhere else. He came from the Father with a message of fatherly reconciliation and love to prodigal sons; He has gone to the Father to prepare a place for the prodigals who come back through Him to the Father. We know in Christ that we are sons of God—though prodigal sons. We know in Christ that we can, if we will, have the old place in the Father's heart and home. Past and future lay unveiled to Christ's eye. Our faith in Him reposes on this self-consciousness of Christ, and His own testimony. *But you do not know*, etc. Jesus' knowledge of God was in one respect perfect sympathy with God, and with God's truth

15 and whither I go. Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no  
 16 man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true; for I am  
 17 not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. It is also

and holiness. The Pharisees knew not the Divine imprint in Jesus, because they were not in sympathy with its nature.

15 f. Their method of judgment contrasted with Christ's. *You according to the flesh judge: I judge no one*; cp. vii. 24. *Flesh* here is to be interpreted by the passage quoted, *i.e.* the outward appearance. They judged Jesus according to His apparently humble antecedents and position: by the circumstances, in short, of His life, not by the truths which He uttered. Men who live according to the outward see nothing but the outward; cannot appreciate that which is within—the reality. Their judgment of men is not by their true worth; but by their wealth, or show, or pretensions, and the like: just by the standard that has no abiding value. Jesus judges no one: neither according to the flesh, nor in any such way as at all to bring His judgment of men within the same category as that of the Pharisees. It was the constant business of these Pharisees to judge and condemn other people; cp. vii. 49 f. They judged, but did not try to save, men. Deeming themselves superior, the very pattern of perfection in religion and morals, they constituted themselves the censors of their brethren. So they now judged Jesus, told Him He spoke what was false. By condemning others, we escape from self-condemnation. Jesus—the one competent judge—the one who alone has the right to judge men (v. 27), refrains; see iii. 17 and xii. 47. It is ever the case that the most righteous is the most lenient in passing sentence on his fellow-men. In Christ's case there was the higher law at work of Divine salvation for the lost and hopeless. Jesus might have held men up to ridicule, for He knew what was in man; He might have been the severest critic and satirist. If He had judged as the Pharisees judged, salvation had been out of the question for any man. *And if, however, I judge, my judgment is true.* The other side of the truth: Jesus could not help judging by the life He lived, the character He exhibited, the words He spoke, the cross on which He died, xii. 47 ff. His appearance on earth was the world's judgment, xii. 31. Being the Light of the world, He could not but reveal the world's darkness, and so judge it. And this revelation of the darkness is but one needful stage in the process of salvation. No judgment—no salvation. Sin is judged in the soul as the soul is conscious of the redemption of Christ. *My judgment is true, i.e.* ideally true (xix. 35), the one true and eternal judgment: the judgment that is final and self-evidencing. And the reason of this is His perfect unity with the Father. *I am not alone, but I and the Father who sent me.* His judgment is God's, because He is in such communion and union with God that nothing He does or says is without God. It is the glory of Christ that He is *not alone*, morally; for self-sufficiency and independence are isolation. Human glory is "the mind, free and independent," and the like. Christ's honour is dependence on the Father. Observe how the words *not alone* comprehend the mystery of the inbeing of the Persons of the Trinity in one another; also how Jesus in full consciousness of Godhead can venture to say, "*I and the Father*," etc.; cp. vii. 29, and the discourse in v. 30 ff., which is closely parallel; also x. 30. Jesus therefore is not a revealer of Divine truth, He is the revelation of God: He is God Himself to us, in being, knowledge, will,

written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.  
 18 I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent  
 19 me beareth witness of me. Then said they unto him, Where  
 is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my  
 Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my  
 20 Father also. These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he  
 taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for  
 21 his hour was not yet come. Then said Jesus again unto  
 them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in

purpose, Heb. i. 3; Col. i. 15. Observe, also, the subordination in respect of the work of salvation to be done, in the words: "Who sent me."

17 f. Cp. v. 37, on which this is an advance in argument. In that passage Jesus refers to the witness borne to Him by His Father, both in the works He did, and the word in Scripture and in conscience. He here refers to the O. T. law of evidence requiring two or three witnesses to verify a fact (Deut. xvii. 6, xix. 15), and declares that it is satisfied in His own case. *I am He that bears witness of myself, and the Father that sent me bears witness of me.* The fact that He was not a solitary man—speaking for none but for Himself—was plain. He was ever speaking on behalf of the Father; and as the Son showing and stating that He was sent by the Father to tell men, and to enable men, to believe in God as their Father, and return to Him in repentance and faith, and claim in Himself to be sons. This was the double witness: a Father seeking in and through Him, the Son, His wandering, rebellious children. It is a witness that appeals to all who feel that their deepest need is to have a Father made known and reconciled to them, and a son's heart bestowed on them. That the Father speaks and pleads through Him, the Son, is the chief evidence to the Divineness of Christ's mission. Hence He says, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," xiv. 9 ff.

19. *Where is thy Father?* Either spoken with a sneer, or to press Christ to say God was His Father, in order to arrest Him for blasphemy. They might mean, When can we hear this witness in your favour? Jesus replies: *Ye neither know me nor my Father. If ye knew me, ye would know my Father also.* If men do not see the Father in Christ, they can see Him nowhere else, xiv. 9 ff. The Father is visible only in the life of the Son. A son's heart will recognise the Father's words and love. They could not respond, not having the heart of a son. They had no sympathy with Jesus as the Son, because they did not desire a Father in God, and did not strive after a son's loving obedience and trust. Show us thy God! is a cry met by the counter cry, Show us thy man! The Father is known only by and in the Son—the Son made man. And men who do not recognise in the Son made man the very expression and embodiment of their own feelings, hopes, desires, aspirations towards God, have no capability of recognising God at all; "No man cometh to the Father but through me," xiv. 6.

20. See vii. 30, 44. *The treasury*, where thirteen brazen chests received the taxes and charitable offerings (Meyer).

(2.) 21–30. A new scene. The discourse of Jesus in these verses, interrupted by the Jews, turns on His personality and His relation to the Father, the warning being given that they will find out who He is only too late.

21. *Ye shall seek me*: in despair, not in penitence and faith, Matt. xxv. 11.

22 your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come. Then said the  
 Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go,  
 23 ye cannot come. And he said unto them, Ye are from  
 beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not  
 24 of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in  
 your sins; for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in

Cp. vii. 33 f.; the warning is repeated with the still more tragic addition: *Ye shall die in your sin* (not *sins*, as in A.V.). Their sin was rejection of Himself, and that is the root and essence of all sin, xvi. 9; and because of that sin they should die without salvation, its comfort or hope. Christ's reference is partly national, partly individual. To die in sin is to die with sin unrepented of and unforgiven; sin the permanent element of the soul: death spiritual leading on to death eternal.

22. *Will he kill himself?* He is not to kill himself—is he? A still more ignominious suggestion than the previous one (vii. 35) of going to the Diaspora.

23 f. Jesus, disregarding the insult, explains His meaning in that enigmatical saying. He and they are of two different *origins*, so far as the *principles* of their lives go, and must therefore have different *destinies*. They move in different spheres of thought, of feeling, of aspiration, and action. He has already asserted His knowledge of His own origin and destiny, ver. 14, and implied what these are, ver. 16. He now states them plainly. *Ye are of the things beneath; I am of the things above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.* See 1 John iv. 4 ff.; Matt. xvi. 23; ch. iii. 31. He speaks of "this world" as the embodiment of resistance and hatred to the will of God. To be "of this world," therefore, is to have the will enslaved to evil, to things beneath, to darkness, to death; and to have the life drifting downwards in sin to death. Hence the chasm separating Him from men simply as men, mortal and earthly; and then from all men whose aims, hopes, desires, thoughts are "of this world." Jesus, as conformed with absolute perfectness to God's will, and having no personal end but His Father's glory as aim, is "of the things above," Col. iii. 1. But His previous existence with God and as God is implied. The principle of separation is in men themselves; and it is in *all* men; these Jews were not singular in this respect. But they were rejecting the God-given deliverance from the bondage of this evil world. Though all men are by nature "of the things beneath," their wills being "bondsmen to the dark," yet faith in Him (iii. 15 f., vi. 40 ff.) who came from above, and who is *of the things above*—absolutely separate from sin and sinners—and who, because He is so, is able to rescue us from the thralldom of things beneath, and draw us upwards to God, delivers them from the power and the doom of this world, and unites them to the Person and the holiness and the destinies of the Son of God. *If ye believe not*, etc., they should die in their sin; but need not. *That I am* (or *That I am he*). The R.V. has the former in *marg.*; but the American Revisers object to the change, both here, in ver. 28 and xiii. 19. It is tempting to make this change, in order to take advantage of the allusion, which would be natural, to the great O. T. affirmation of Jehovah (Ex. iii. 14), "I am that I am;" cp. Isa. xli. 4, xliii. 13, xlviii. 12, etc. The importance of the passage is equally conserved by supplying the words: *That I am He* who is of the things above; *He* who is not of this world: *He* who has come to save you from the power of the things beneath: in short,

25 your sins. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even *the same* that I said unto you  
 26 from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge of you : but he that sent me is true ; and I speak to the world  
 27 those things which I have heard of him. They understood  
 28 not that he spake to them of the Father. Then said Jesus

the very One you are seeking—the Christ. This belief which Christ demanded in Himself was not simply an intellectual one. Their unbelief was due to moral causes ; and to believe that Jesus was the Christ would imply a moral and spiritual regeneration. They must cease to be under the influence of “things beneath.” Then the certainty of life through faith is as emphatic as that of death through unbelief.

25. *They say to Him—who art thou? lit. You! who are you?* They wish to make Him say plainly out that He is the Christ. See x. 24. This was not Christ’s way. *Just what I have been saying to you.* Not by direct statement, but by the inferences to be drawn from character, words, and works ; inferences which they could have easily drawn if they would. (But these words have been a great problem to expounders. The R.V. has in *marg.*, “How is it that I speak to you at all?” and Meyer favours—“What I from the very beginning also say to you,” nearly identical with the translation given above.)

26. *Many things I have concerning you to speak and to judge.* Such things as He had been just saying, ver. 24. Perhaps there may be an exposure of the feelings in part prompting their last question, as if they were resenting His right to judge them so. Or the sequence of thought may be this : You ask me who I am, and you think that you are my judges. On the contrary, I am your judge, and could say much to show you how well I know your character and state of mind (ver. 15 f.).

*Many things—but He that sent me is true.* And how many soever, and how severe soever, the things I might utter of you,—they are all true. *True*, opposed to false, as vii. 18, *not* vii. 28. God is true, alike in His promises of mercy and threatening of judgments. *And I—what I heard from Him, these things I speak unto the world.* The Sender being true, the sent is also true, i. 18, iii. 34, “He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God.” The Son, personally as well as by word, is the declaration of the whole truth of God to the world ; see Heb. i. 2 ; truth which saves men, and at the same time judges them. The greater the salvation, the greater the judgment. *What I heard*, points to pre-existence and intimate fellowship.

27. *They perceived not*, etc. Their want of perception arose from their infinite remove from the self-renunciation of the Son of God. That one could speak of God so simply, as of a life-associate, and yet so reverently, as of one without whom no thought, no word, no step could be conceived, spoken, or taken, was astonishing. Great claims they could understand, because they were themselves ruled by the flesh ; but this self-effacing dependence on God they could not understand. Jesus was taking them into a region (moral, not intellectual) where they could not and would not follow.

28 f. *Therefore [R.V.] Jesus said.* Jesus speaks to their state of mind, and warns them. Their moral and spiritual ignorance would lead them to make away with Him ; and then they should know when too late for them, (1) that

unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.  
 29 And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me  
 30 alone; for I do always those things that please him. As he  
 31 spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my

He was *He*, their very Christ, the very One they needed; (2) that He was sent from the Father, and not self-sent; (3) that He was the very revelation of the Father, teaching what the Father taught Him. *When ye have lifted up the Son of man.* Cp. iii. 14, xii. 32. Whether they knew what He meant now by "lifting up the Son of man" we cannot say. Note how it is always the *Son of man* who is spoken of as being lifted up. The results of the cross, the glory at the right hand of God, and gift of the Spirit, through which Divine power went with the preaching of His name, are all included. The knowledge of Jesus was perfect as to all that should happen. The highest act of self-renunciation became the clearest proof that Jesus was all He claimed to be, the Son obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, and therefore highly exalted, Phil. ii. 8 f. And not only has Jesus come from such communion with God—He abides in it. *He who sent me is with me* (the preposition *with* signifying union of interest and of action). *He has not left me alone*, see ver. 16. (Omit "the Father.") *For I do always the things that are pleasing to Him.* The metaphysical goes hand in hand with the moral. Jesus is one in essence with God. Jesus, as Son of man, is humble and obedient, and grounds the Father's constant presence and alliance with Him on the fact of His perfect doing of His will. This is the greatest humility for the Son of God. But it is the most astounding claim for *man*, a son of man, to make, unless He be the Son of man. The deepest self-abasement and the grandest self-exaltation here kiss each other. The importance of such a testimony from Christ's own self-consciousness goes without saying. Either He was holy, harmless, and sinless, as He here claims, or the greatest impostor.

30. *Many believed on Him.* It is to be remarked that, as at vii. 40, the highest claims of the Son of God are always responded to by many who feel that this personal testimony of Christ, calm, clear, unwavering, is the strongest ground on which to base their own personal trust.

(3.) 31-59. Jesus speaks to those who believe Him, exhorting them to abide in His word, and assuring them that if they do so, they shall have the knowledge and the freedom of the truth. On their replying that they were Abraham's seed, and were never bondsmen to any one, Jesus explains that He refers to the freedom of the will from the dominion of sin, and proceeds to show how the claim to be Abraham's seed in any true sense is inconsistent with their desire to put Himself to death. There are two fatherhoods, God and the devil, to the one or the other of which they must belong, and these are known by their fruits.

31 f. *Who had believed Him.* Observe the important distinction between believing on Christ, ver. 30, and believing Christ, as here. This distinction is so clearly defined that we are almost shut up to conclude that those to whom Jesus now chiefly turned His attention were not those who had believed on

- 32 word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed ; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.
- 33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man : how sayest thou, Ye shall be

Him, *i.e.* the genuine believers of ver. 30, but those who were half-way, believing that Jesus spoke truly, and was a good man, perhaps a prophet, but who had not yet surrendered heart and will to Him. This conclusion would then be confirmed by the otherwise unaccountable change which takes place in the attitude of those to whom Jesus speaks. Jesus accordingly applies the test of a fuller disclosure of His person. *If ye (emphatic) abide in my word*, cp. v. 38, "His word abiding in you;" xv. 7, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you;" xii. 47; 2 John 9. The effect of these, with different shades of signification and different applications, is the same. Surrender of mind, heart, and will to the power of Christ's doctrine must be complete and enduring. There must be more than a mere recognition of the striking personality of Jesus, there must be the reception of His word into conscience and heart, and a trial of the life in the light of it. Truth would be known in their inward life, it would penetrate their whole being. They would not be eagerly looking without for signs. *Ye are truly my disciples*. The test of Christian discipleship is continuance in Christ and in His word. If the supposition above be correct, the application to the hearers is obvious. They believed that Jesus spoke honestly and truly, and that He was a sincere man ; as yet, however, there was no saving impression on conscience or heart. Two great results shall follow, *knowledge of the truth and liberty*. (1) *You shall know the truth*. The truth,—one of John's great conceptions, reaching its climax in xiv. 6 ; see i. 14, 17, v. 33, ver. 46, and I John throughout. The perception of the full and absolute truth of God follows surrender to its influence, and perception of Jesus as the Christ of God would follow obedience to the words which Jesus spoke, for the word of Christ is the revelation of eternal truth. (2) Wherever there is truth there is liberty. *And the truth shall make you free*, James i. 25. Jesus explains immediately in what this freedom consists. The occasion and connection do not at first seem clear. Perhaps Jesus sought simply to make them realize their actual condition, moral and spiritual. Absolutely speaking, no one is a free man who is ignorant of truth, much less so who fears or shrinks from the disclosure of truth, or whom truth condemns. Ignorance is the mother of slaves, slaves in the understanding and in the will. As that is the truth which a man has when he is himself true, that is liberty when he is freed from the dominion of his own passions.

33. *The seed of Abraham are we, and to no one have we ever been in bondage*. See Isa. xli. 8 ; Gal. iii. 29. They did not realize their need of such blessings, who claimed to be the salt of the earth, to be the custodians of Divine truth, to be the free-born children of Abraham. Their pride is touched, and that pride was passionate and deep ; apparently trying to shelter a historical, palpable falsehood under religious claims. Ideally free, as the heirs of the great promises of God to Abraham, they were actually a subject people. They had Abraham's blood in their veins, but not his faith in their hearts, Matt. iii. 9. *How dost thou say*, etc.—with a shade of contempt. Perhaps also they mean, we claim to be disciples of a greater than you.

34 made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto  
 35 you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And  
 the servant abideth not in the house for ever; *but* the Son  
 36 abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye

34-38. Jesus replies that the evil-doer is the slave; and the son, not the slave, has a recognised and sure place in the house. They must obtain the son's privileges from Him who alone has the right to confer them. He admits that they are Abraham's descendants outwardly; inwardly—their deeds disprove any true connection, as they seek to put Himself to death. Whence their origin there can be no doubt, for as Christ's words reveal His paternity, their deeds reveal theirs.

34. *Verily, verily.* See i. 51. *Every one who doeth sin*, iii. 20 f., v. 29, and especially i John iii. 4, 8, 9. The habitual practice of sin is implied in the words. Jesus explains that the freedom He means is freedom from the bondage of a corrupt heart, to which the will becomes enslaved. *Every one*, etc. He appeals to individual conscience; no matter whether the man be of Abraham's seed or not, he cannot escape this charge. National descent had not made it possible for him to break this spiritual and moral thralldom. *A slave of sin.* The sinner thinks sin is his tool, but he himself is the tool of sin. Sin obtains the mastery of his affections and will, and when the galling chains are felt, and efforts made to break through them, the awful tyranny is realized.

35. The positions of son and slave in the household are contrasted. The slave has no assured privilege or right. He is the creature of the will and pleasure of his master. "Between slave and master there is no one point in common," Aris. *Eth.* viii. 11. He may be sold, turned adrift, or put to death at the merest caprice. When old and useless, slaves were often cast out to die. The son has his own place, second only to that of the head of the house; he is the heir of all, and the object of affectionate care and pride.

*But the slave does not abide in the house for ever, the Son abides for ever.* The house is the kingdom of God, though the figure is not to be pressed in its details. The chief point of contrast is the temporary place and the enduring place of the slave and the Son respectively in the house. As regards the Jews, the application was obvious. The kingdom was, so far as outward principles went, to be taken from them because they *would* reject the Sonship, the real and eternal privilege of the kingdom offered them, and remain in the slavery of sin. No one with the heart of a slave towards God can possibly be within His eternal house; and the heart of a sinner unpardoned is the heart of a slave. *The Son*, etc., may be taken as a general principle, though its highest and unique application is found in Jesus Christ, Heb. iii. 5, 6. And Jesus has all the powers of the house entrusted to Him.

36. *If, therefore, the Son shall make you free, really free shall ye be.* The Son of God makes free all who believe on Him, by delivering the conscience from the sense of guilt, and the will from the power of sin, and inspires the Spirit of Sonship to His Father, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus which sets us free from the law of sin and death, Rom. viii. 2. In Him, too, we have the Son's standing and privilege. See Gal. iv. 4 f. The kingdom of God is a kingdom of sons. Jesus has gained for us the son's footing in the Father's house by His merits. He has also put the son's heart into us by His Spirit. Confidence toward God, joy of access, assurance, and deliver-

37 shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham's seed :  
 but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.  
 38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father ; and ye do  
 39 that which ye have seen with your father. They answered  
 and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto  
 them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works  
 40 of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath  
 told you the truth, which I have heard of God : this did not

ance from the love and power of sin, all follow this twofold work of Christ for us and in us. And as the standing in the house is not precarious, the service is that of a son, serving not for place or acceptance, but from love and for love. Cp. ver. 32. Jesus the Son is *the Truth* which makes free. And the freedom is therefore not in outward things, but in the sense and spirit of sonship itself. God is known and trusted and obeyed as a reconciled and loving Father, Rom. v. 5. Love is the law that binds. God is not honoured but as loved ; and not loved except through filial hearts. Eph. ii. 18 (ch. xv. 15 on the distinction between a servant and a *friend*).

37 f. The question turned on their spiritual parentage. Lineage goes by character as revealed and determined in acts. Their connection with Abraham was an outward and physical one, not inward and spiritual. *I know*, etc. Thoughts of hate and of murder were in their souls. *Because my word does not have place in you* (or, *has not free course in you*, R.V.). They were not abiding in it, nor letting it abide in them. Unlike Abraham, who believed God's word, "against hope believing in hope," with much less ground for faith than they had ; believed it and acted on it, with nothing to show for its truth, and a great deal to suffer in obeying it ; who went out not knowing whither he went ; who received with reverence the messengers of God. Neither in righteousness nor in faith were they the children of Abraham. Whose children then were they ? Their murderous intent proclaimed their paternity ; even as Christ's words proclaimed His. *What I have seen with my Father I speak ; and you, therefore, what ye heard from your father are doing.* There is a spring feeding the motives and impulses, welling up in the individual actions : the spring of the nature derived from a fatherhood. Our life betrays to what home we belong, and to which our habits continually ally us. Jesus Himself is no exception to that rule. Their father was the devil.

39-41a. They reply that Abraham is their father. Jesus answers again, that their desire to kill Him proved them to be no true children of Abraham. But they had a father, the real parent of their deeds. *If ye are children of Abraham, the works of Abraham ye would be doing.* (There is some uncertainty about the grammar, but the sense is clear.) The works of Abraham were faith, self-sacrifice, absolute self-surrender to, and profound reverence for, the word and will of God. *But now ye seek to kill me.* Our Lord's repetition of this charge is remarkable. Underneath even the half-belief there lurked a feeling that had more or less kinship with murder. Jesus lays bare the essence and ultimate fruit of sin : rejection of Himself, which is rejection of God. *A man who has spoken the truth to you, which I heard from God*, xii. 44. They were, therefore, not in sympathy with the God of truth, or with the truth of God. *Ye do the works of your father.* Solemn

- 41 Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father,  
 42 *even* God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from  
 43 God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* because ye cannot hear my

reiteration of the charge of a paternity very different from that which they claimed. Character is known by deeds, and character is the product of our spiritual and moral affinities. In all we do we are the children of our parents.

41b. *We were not born of fornication; one Father have we, God:* apparently considering Christ's words to be an imputation on their pure descent, attested in their pure worship, on which they prided themselves, contrasted with the mongrel Samaritans, iv. 22. Perhaps a reminiscence of Mal. ii. 10 f., "Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us? . . . Judah hath married the daughter of a strange god." They make claim thus to a higher paternity even than Abraham's.

42-47. Jesus has disproved their right to call themselves children of Abraham, by showing them that they did not receive the word of God and obey it, even though failing to comprehend its purport, and at great cost to self, as did Abraham. He now proceeds to disprove their claim to have God as Father, by the fact that they were withholding their faith and love from Himself, *the perfect exposition of God's truth, and the perfect exposition of God's holiness.* And then He ascribes their paternity directly to the devil.

42. *If God were your Father, ye would love me:* on the principle, though with higher application, of 1 John v. 1, "Every one who loveth Him that begat, loveth Him also that is begotten of Him;" as Jesus now asserts (1) that personally God is the source of His existence; and (2) that God is the author of His mission to earth. They should love Him instead of hating and seeking to slay Him. Even if they felt it difficult to believe, they might still have this affection of love excited in their hearts. One needs must love the highest when he sees it. The cogency of this Jesus brings out a few verses farther on. *For I out of God came forth, and am come.* The origin of the personal existence of the Son must be intended in these simple but profound words; see xvi. 27 and 28. The preposition "out of" (different from the "from" of clause second) is that which denotes closest relation, and here that of father and son. The words "came forth" refer, therefore, to what is called the eternal generation of the Son of God; the following "and am come" seem to refer also to this, with the implicit meaning, "and so, such being my origin, I am here;" so that this remarkable expression would cover both facts of the Eternal Generation and the Incarnation. Veiled in human form though He was, they might know, and would if God were their Father, that His connection with God was something unique. *For neither from (or of) myself have I come, but He sent me;* cp. vii. 28 f. The test of a self-assumed mission He has already spoken of. The distinction of prepositions in the two clauses is important.

43. *Why do ye not know my speech?* Admitting there was that in it which made it hard to understand. *Because ye cannot hear my word:* cp. vi. 60, denying that it was impossible to receive, though hard. Observe

44 word. Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in

the distinction between *speech* and *word*. Had they given free course to the word of Jesus that searched conscience and heart; the word that told them they were slaves of sin, and could not abide in the house of God for ever; the word that exposed their inmost thoughts and intentions; the secret hate and murder that lay there; the word, in short, about *themselves*,—they would have known His speech about Himself, would have recognised under the mysterious dark manner of it the very tones of God. That they did not, proved that God was not their Father, they had no moral or spiritual kindredness with Him.

44. *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a manslayer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth, for there is not truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.* If God were not their Father, this was the one alternative, and Jesus expresses it plainly. Their hatred of Him and desire to slay Him, their hatred of the truth that laid bare their love and practice of a lie, these lusts linked them in direct lineal descent with the devil, the primal source of them. The law of heredity, like father like son, receives from Christ's lips its most solemn vindication. There is a personal source of light, and life, and love, and truth. "I came forth out of God." There is a personal source of darkness, death, hate, falsehood. "Ye are of your father the devil." However in words it may be disowned, every one who commits sin and is sin's slave is bound by this law, belongs to this father. This is true of all men until grace regenerates them, which is the truth of ch. iii., and placed in the forefront of this Gospel, i. 12, 13. From this father came the lusts that war against the soul. "Ye will to do;" cp. vii. 17, "If any man *willeth* to do His will," etc. Not the fact of such paternity makes a man's case helpless, but the free surrender of his will to the will of this power of darkness. There is no fatalism in sin. Men are responsible for their volitions, and as sin is not the direct offspring of their own wills, but the offspring of surrender of their wills to this mysterious will behind them, the deliverance from this personal influence is possible, and is the result of Christ's salvation. No man is simply and entirely given over to this evil spirit but by his own free will. In all men there struggle the will of the flesh and the will of God; but to receive Christ is to be born of the Spirit of God, and to be brought into the liberty of sons by the Son Himself. The will then is subject to the will of God. *A manslayer from the beginning*; see Gen. iii. and 1 John iii. 8, 12, and 15. The devil compassed man's sin, and so his death, by the lie against his Maker. He stands at and is the source of all the perversity in the world, none of which had its origin in God, who made all things originally very good. *And stood not in the truth.* It is implied then that the devil once existed in the truth, and is not an originally and eternally evil personality or principle. He fell from a true condition. *Because there is not truth in him.* The untrue in act must proceed from the untrue in thought and in will. Of no man living can it be affirmed that there is not truth in him, for in no case, so far as we can tell, is that surrender made of the will absolutely into the possession of sin, that no possibility is left for its conquest by Christ. But of the devil Jesus says not

him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own : for  
 45 he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell *you* the  
 46 truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of

only that he does evil, that he hates and lies, but that he begets these lusts, wherever found ; for in him truth is not. He is not simply untrue, he is the untrue one ; not wicked only, but the wicked one. He has therefore surrendered his will over to evil, so as to have his nature simply and solely evil. *When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own : for he is a liar, and the father of it.* Perhaps with Gen. iii. in view. This distinguishes the devil from all other evil persons, men at least, that his opposition to the truth of God is nothing accidental in him, but his own peculiar mark, is *he himself*, so far as human history goes at least. The lie has become his nature, it is *his own* ; he has made it so by identifying his will with it. Jesus affirms that the devil is both a liar and the father of lies, and hence the lie is *his own*. As a liar, he is like every other being who gives his will up to sin, and follows his heart's lusts. And the next step is, the production of the lie in others, for sin propagates itself. Only as "the devil sinneth from the beginning," all sin owes its existence to him, "the father of it." The words may be fairly taken to cover the fall of the devil himself from rectitude, and then his relation as author to the historic evil in the world.

45. *But I [as for me], because I say the truth, ye do not believe me.* They believe the devil's lie, not the Saviour's truth. Not only so, they reject the truth *because it is the truth*. Had Jesus spoken to their ear, to their taste, to their national vanity and pride of descent and the like, had He flattered them by seeking His own glory, they would have believed Him. As He says Himself : "I have come in the name of my Father, and ye receive me not ; if another come in his own name, *him* ye will receive," v. 43. Because He told them they were slaves of sin in doing it, they were offended. This profound saying of Christ settles the question whether one can best perceive the truth when he has an interest in finding it to be so, or whether the mind ought not to be strictly impartial. If the latter were the case, it would mean that we have not a constitution originally fitted for the truth, with sympathies more or less clearly working towards it, unless prevented by yielding to our lusts. Whereas the startling assertion of Christ here is that we have this ; the dislike to the truth proves not an unfitness in us for it, but a corruption of nature, a perverted judgment, a blinded understanding. Otherwise, why should men reject it ? The heart rejects what strikes at its lusts. Hence an impartial attitude towards the truth in the endeavour to find and obey it is impossible. (Observe the belief is the belief in the *word* of Jesus simply, not the belief in Himself.)

46 f. Even if they stumbled at the truth which Jesus spoke, they might nevertheless have yielded to the singular purity of His character. Their rejection of the *Sinless* One was a greater condemnation to them than rejection of the *Truthful* One. *Who of you convicts me of sin ?* A direct challenge to His opponents to point out any flaw in His conduct, and an implied affirmation of His sinlessness ; see xiv. 30, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." And this sinlessness is a guarantee for the truth which He speaks. This self-consciousness of Christ, as absolutely an unconsciousness of personal evil, is sublime ; it alone raises Jesus to a height that is out of all possible comparison with the highest of His saints, whose

sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?  
 47 He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear  
 48 *them* not, because ye are not of God. Then answered the

daily confession is: "I am a sinful man, O Lord." The ground of His sinlessness is explained in His eternal pre-existence; see ver. 58. The relation of this *impossibility of sinning* to the facts and moral inferences of the temptations of Jesus, as brought out specially in the Epistle to the Hebrews, is one that has always exercised the spiritual mind, and always will. We must hold, on the one hand, that Jesus being God could not have sinned; and, on the other hand, that the development of His human nature was normal. It is usual to say that Jesus felt the pain and suffering of temptation inseparable from a pure spirit, though not the seductiveness of sin in it, having no sinful principle in Himself. But no explanation can go down to the bottom of the mystery of God manifest in flesh. *If I speak truth, why do ye not believe me?* If they could bring no charge against His moral character, could they not believe that He spoke truth? If not believe *in Him*, at least believe that He was an honest, a true man? Perfect goodness was before them, and they hated it, and sought to kill it. They did not "love Him," ver. 42; thus exposing the fact that they had no sympathy with goodness themselves. No doubt the perfect ideal of human character as embodied in Jesus Christ does draw many to Him, draws them so that though they may have at first rebelled at some of the aspects of His person and His work, they are in spite of themselves brought to deeper insight into these. Jesus answers His own question, in fact there could be but one answer: Rejection of the truth and holiness of God meant on the part of those who did so that they were not of God in sympathy and heart. *He who is of God hears God's words; for this cause ye hear them not, because of God ye are not.* Although the preposition is the same as Jesus uses to describe His relation to God in ver. 42, the words "I came forth out of God" express evidently something different from the thought here. To be "of God" is to be interpreted by such other passages as vi. 37-44, the drawing of the Father; and xviii. 37, to be of the truth. They claimed that God was their Father. Jesus tells them that they have not the nature of God in them, that they have not kindredness with Him in any way, the proof of kindredness with God being the receptive hearing of His words. "To be of God," "to be of the truth," according to John's mode of presenting Christ's doctrine, must mean the preparatory work of the Spirit of God, that drawing of the Father by which there is a certain susceptibility awakened for the full disclosure of Divine life in Christ. All men are *of God* in the sense of having His image, and therefore having so far a capacity for the truth of Christ; for if it were not so, the gospel could not appeal to them. And (ver. 44) all men are *of the devil* in the sense of having a principle of evil in them, that mars and tends to obliterate the image of God. There are not *sorts* of human natures. Accordingly, it is the moral attitude men take up, when conscious of the opposing forces that war within them, the determination of will toward one side or other, which marks them as being, or not being, *of God—of the truth*; cp. iii. 21, "He that doeth truth is coming to the light." Though, of course, the mystery remains unsolved, that viz. of the freedom of our will, with personal responsibility for our self-determination, and of a superhuman power back of what we are ourselves. The crowning act of this preparatory leading is the

Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a  
 49 Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered, I have not a  
 devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.  
 50 And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh  
 51 and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep  
 52 my saying, he shall never see death. Then said the Jews  
 unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is  
 dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my  
 53 saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than  
 our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are

“being born of the Spirit,” or, “of God.” These men could not reject Christ without doing injury to their own consciences. They were suppressing their natural instincts of right and wrong. Recognition of Christ must follow sympathy with truth and purity.

48-end. Last phase of this controversy. Jesus, the *Sinless* and *True*, is also the *Eternally Existent*.—The Jews retort on Jesus that it is He who has a devilish origin. *Do we not well say that a Samaritan art thou, and hast a demon?* They meant a *moral* Samaritan, one who had a Samaritan nature: a demon of hate, malignity, and opposition against themselves. The expression has a positive badness, here and in x. 20; not so marked in vii. 20.

49 f. *I have not a demon; but I honour my Father, and ye dishonour me; but I do not seek my own glory, there is who seeks and judges*; cp. vii. 18, v. 44 f. Jesus gives a calm denial to their impious charge. He was seeking His Father's glory, which no demon could do, and no one possessed with a demon. Though they dishonoured Him, He could leave His honour safely in the Father's hands, who shall judge both Him and them. The Father's judgment on the Son was pronounced in the resurrection, Rom. i. 4, and the effect was the judgment of the world; see xii. 31 f., xvi. 11. This forms the transition, apparently, to the next statement, introduced by Christ's usual more solemn formula.

51. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, If any one keep my word, he shall not see death for ever* [*i.e.* never die]. Death will be the judgment of men out of Christ. The abiding in His word brings knowledge of the truth and liberty; the keeping of His word, *i.e.* its fulfilment in gospel obedience, result of abiding in it, brings eternal life; see on v. 24 ff., “He that believeth my word, and believeth Him that sent me, hath eternal life,” etc., “hath passed out of death into life.” This blessing also seems to stand as the crown of the series in this section of the book, chs. vii., viii.: Water of life—guiding light—freedom of sons in the Father's house—endless life. Jesus prepares the way for the great utterance of ver. 58. Union with Himself, implied in keeping His word, is union with the “I am.”

52 f. The Jews, supposing, or willing to suppose, that He refers to natural death, are convinced Jesus is possessed. All their great fathers have died in ordinary course of nature. Who is he, that he should claim not only to have an endless life, but even to bestow it on others? *Thou sayest he shall never taste of death*, Matt. xvi. 28; Mark ix. 1; Luke ix. 27; Heb. ii. 9. Why the change of word? Probably to render the absurdity more evident by accentuating the expression. *Thou art not greater than our father Abraham?* cp. iv. 12, the same phrase, “*Thou art not greater than our*

54 dead : whom makest thou thyself? Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing : it is my Father that honoureth me ; of whom ye say, that he is your God.  
 55 Yet ye have not known him ; but I know him : and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you : but I  
 56 know him, and keep his saying. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day ; and he saw *it*, and was glad.  
 57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old,  
 58 and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily,  
 59 verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then

father Jacob?" The repetition betrays excitement and clamorous voices. *What kind of person dost thou make thyself?*

54-56. Jesus disclaims desire to exalt Himself, still continuing calmly. Not Himself, but His Father glorifies Him; see xvii. 1. The Father glorified the Son by giving Him the Spirit not by measure, iii. 34; by giving Him equal power of work, v. 19 ff.; by bearing witness through Him in works and words, v. 37. They claim His Father to be their own God, but they know Him not. *But I know Him.* The two words rendered *know*—applied to the Jews and to Jesus respectively—are different; the former, knowledge of outward perception; the latter, absolute comprehension; see on vii. 28 f. To say He was ignorant of God, would be a lie equal to their claim of knowledge of God.

*I keep His word*; see ver. 29. The continual theme of Jesus is His dependence on the Father, and His loving obedience to His will, vi. 57, v. 36, 17, 19. This claim to know God with a thorough knowledge, and to be and *become* obedient to His word, fittingly prepares the way for the great truth which follows, ver. 58.

*Your father Abraham rejoiced greatly to see my day, i.e.* in the anticipation of witnessing its dawn on the earth. *And he saw it, and was glad.* Christ's day was the day of promise fulfilled; when the new age of gospel grace began in the advent of the Son of God in flesh. More or less consciously, Abraham rejoiced in the Messianic hope; and his joy grew deeper, truer, just in proportion as by the discipline of his faith other hopes clinging to this were stripped off, and the Messianic reality stood out. In heaven he saw its realization in Christ's descent to earth; cp. Luke ix. 31. If not this, the seeing of Christ's day must refer to some vision of faith at some one or other crisis in his life, such as Isaac's sacrifice, that struck out new channels of aspiration in Abraham's breast. We must be content with the general way in which Jesus refers to this wonderful experience of the father of the faithful. It was in the faith of Christ substantially he was justified; and in the vision of Christ incarnate and crucified, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, that he was glad.

57. *Thou art not yet fifty years old*, etc. A general statement, conveying that Jesus did not appear to be past the prime of manhood, but was decidedly on the younger side of it.

58 f. *Verily, verily, I say to you, Before Abraham was born, I am.* The culminating point of the discourse, and ultimate ground of Christ's claim in ver. 12. He is the Light of the world, because He is the "I am." The verb used of Abraham denotes a coming into existence, whereas that which Christ uses of Himself denotes absolute continuous existence, not beginning—not

took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

CHAP. IX. 1. And as *Jesus* passed by, he saw a man which was  
2 blind from *his* birth. And his disciples asked him, saying,  
Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was  
ending (Ex. iii. 14). He thus answers their question, ver. 53. And they recognise all that the answer means,—equality with God, and endeavour to deal out to Him the usual penalty of blasphemy. *Was hid*, or *hid Himself*, not necessarily by a miracle; cp. Luke iv. 30. The words *going through*, etc., are probably not genuine.

CH. IX. Cure of the man blind from birth.—(1) 1-7. The cure.  
(2) 8-12. The surprise occasioned among the man's acquaintances. (3) 13-34. What the Pharisees think and do. (4) 35-end. The man confesses Jesus to be the Son of God.

(1.) 1-7. The Cure. 1-5. *Passing by*. The inference is that this incident followed immediately after the events of ch. viii. The vicinity of the Temple was the resort of beggars and maimed or diseased persons, Acts iii. 1, etc. It is rather difficult, however, to believe that the record from viii. 12 onwards to the close of this chapter is that of a single day, and that day the Sabbath, ver. 14. *In order that he should be born blind*. The question of the disciples implies knowledge of the man's antecedents (possibly the man himself appealed to passers-by as the *born blind*), and acceptance of the prevailing belief that attributed special misfortune, disaster, sickness and the like to special sin in those visited with them; cp. Luke xiii. 4. The peculiarity of this case precluded sin in the subject himself, unless, indeed, on the supposition of the possibility of sin in the embryo state, or of the fact of pre-existence of souls,—doctrines which appear to have been held by the Rabbins. The prominence which the inexorable laws of moral and physical heredity receive in the Old Testament (Ex. xx. 5; Deut. v. 9), though the great truth of individual responsibility rose clear out of that of the solidarity of the family or nation (Deut. xxiv. 16; Ezek. xviii.), taken together with the facts of life, suggests to the disciples the one alternative; the manifest impossibility of applying this principle in every individual case of suffering or penalty, suggested the speculation of the Rabbis. The other alternative, the exaggeration of the truth that sin means suffering, that a man must reap what he has sown, or what has been sown for him, in many respects, led to this false specific connection of a *particular* penalty with a *particular* sin. Jesus, not denying that sin means suffering, or that a man's infirmities of body may arise from parents' sins, rejected the idea that this blindness was due to specific sin in those directly concerned, asserting that its purpose was the manifestation of God's works; He then speaks of the urgency pressing on Him to do the works of God while the day lasted, for the night comes when none can work. And, lastly, He repeats His claim to be the light of the world (viii. 12). The Lord turns the thoughts of His disciples away from inquiry as to the cause of this affliction, and bids them reflect rather on the purpose which it is meant to serve. Or He gives them a cause embracing every lesser one, and applicable to every case of suffering. The spectacle to Jesus was a call for help, not a call to profitless speculation; a call to prove Himself the light of the world, and that the works of God, of which He had also said that they testified His

- 3 born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made  
 4 manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.  
 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

Father had sent Him, were works of pitiful concern for suffering men. And He sought to inspire His disciples with the same feelings at the sight of life's miseries and sorrows, these being occasions for God's servants to manifest God's works in the reflection of Divine mercy, pity, love for all. In view of this life's mysteries of sadness, Jesus does not encourage His servants to ask questions as to the origin of evil and the like, with no practical bearing. Life is too short for such; it is for working the works of God. *The works of God*, ver. 3, are the same as *the works of Him who sent me*, ver. 4 (not miracles only, but including these), and we cannot think it strange that Jesus should connect the man's blindness with His own appearance on earth: born blind *in order that* Jesus might give Him sight: when we remember how unique that appearance from first to last was. Within the larger circle, namely, that evil is made to serve God's purpose at last, and that all things work together for good to them who love God, there is the lesser circle of Christ's activity, from which He felt that all merely accidental was excluded. In our ordinary experience, special providences, that seem to embrace the whole scope of our lives, occur. *The works of Him that sent me* are works which one might look for from Him whose typical and greatest work was sending His Son into the world to save the world, iii. 17,—proofs of wisdom and love. If there were no suffering in life, there would be no sympathy awakened, no desire to relieve it, none of the best traits of human nature. Even Jesus felt the need of diligence in God's service arising from the limited time at His disposal. The words are capable of an obvious general interpretation. *Day*, meaning the lifetime of man; *night*, its close. But He too had a day of twelve hours, see xi. 9; He too was under necessity, being man, to have the shortness of man's working day borne in on Him; He who had an eternity behind Him, and an eternity before Him for His work, must feel, as we do, that our opportunity (note the plural pronoun *we* in ver. 4, R.V.) is short, and that the future depends on our use of the present. The mission of Jesus is unique, *Him that sent me: I am the light of the world*—but He does not claim the monopoly of doing the works of God, which are here those of goodness and mercy. "*We must work*," etc. It is from the mission of Christ in fact that we know what God's works really are. The plural of the pronoun—*we*—makes it emphatic. 5. Our redemption was achieved by the Son of God *on earth*; and the substance of the Gospel that sets Him forth to men is what He did and suffered for us while here, being all He was. *When* [or *since*, not *so long as*] *I am*, etc.: note the return to the first person; His own personal presence among men is the source of all their illumination in the knowledge of God and His will, and it is to His personal return that He commands His Church to look continually. Withdrawn, at the right hand of God, carrying on the work of His completed redemption through His Spirit, no less than when here, He is the world's light; but the words express His own deep sense of what He is to the world, and of how much He has to do to save it, rather than any contrast between His personal presence and absence. He had to shine—to kindle a light while here, that men might

- 6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man  
 7 with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is, by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

recognise it as the true and only light of God, and cherish it and follow it. Being in the world, He is and must ever henceforth be the world's light. Compare what Jesus says of the work of the Holy Spirit in chs. xiv., xv., xvi. As these words refer back to viii. 12, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the miracle recorded here is but a practical illustration of that great truth. He who had claimed to be the world's light was proving Himself so, not simply by doing a miracle, but by coming in contact with the darkness of the world's miseries, sympathizing with sufferers, relieving them; He was thus applying what He had said of Himself to the common and urgent needs of men. Though He was stoned for His claims, the sight of misery made Him set every consideration aside but the one that He was here to help men, and that His time was short.

6 f. *He spat on the ground*, etc.:<sup>1</sup> an occasional practice with Jesus in such cases; see Mark vii. 33, viii. 23. We may be sure Jesus had some good reason for all this outward show. Perhaps the reason is to be sought in the naturalness of the action, combining touch with use of simplest appliances, helping the faith of the blind man, more dependent than others on such external things. And the order to wash the clay off his eyes at the pool of Siloam must have had the same intention. The character of the man, too, has to be taken into account, and we judge from the sequel that the exercise of Christ's healing virtue only through these several secondary means, and the opportunity given to the man for his own reflections, in the absence of Christ, were more likely to awaken his interest in Christ Himself, and afford a test as to whether he would be satisfied with power of outward vision, and not rather seek contact with the person of the Healer. Jesus, like God, veiled His power under such a cloak of subordinate causes. One who sought glory for himself would have made *himself* more prominent; cp. the miracle of feeding the thousands with a few loaves and fishes, where a charlatan would have made a pile of loaves, if he could, out of the few. And we are not going astray from the line of inference here when we see in this careful, even elaborate process of cure, honour put by Christ on our use of all subordinate means in respect of the work of grace, while we know that the power is above them all in the living will of the Son of God. And surely there is a proof in it too of the tenderer, more personal interest of Jesus in the case before Him than if He had said, "Be whole!" and passed on His way. Every man must be dealt with so as to feel that Jesus loves him, and binds him to Himself by special bonds. Perhaps the more direct and personal the expression of faith, the more direct the cure; see Matt. ix. 27 ff., xx. 29 ff. Here the man asked nothing, expressed nothing; and if Christ's compassion were touched, it needed, notwithstanding, an element of individual faith to make it effectual. The moral and spiritual sensibilities of the man were touched when he was set on a course of obedience and faith. Expectation, hope, trust, were aroused. *Siloam, which is interpreted [i.e. in Greek] Sent.* The evangelist seems to see (by a slight change in the etymology) in the name

<sup>1</sup> The medicinal use of *saliva* was recognised in old times.

8 The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others *said*, He is like him: 10 *but* he said, I am *he*. Therefore said they unto him, How 11 were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went 12 and washed, and I received sight. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not. 13 They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was 14 blind. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the

of the pool in this connection something significantly prophetic of Christ and His mission of mercy, the *Sent* by the Father; cp. Isa. viii. 6; perhaps not without some allusion to the water of life. (Luke xiii. 4; Neh. iii. 15.) "Fifty feet long, twenty deep, and as many in width, the sides so broken down as to render it difficult to take correct measurements. It lies in the mouth of the Tyropœan, and the water runs from it under a rocky precipice across the road to some gardens in the valley of Jehoshaphat. It is a small rill, which is soon exhausted among beds of radishes and cucumbers. Water was drawn from it for the Temple, and it was supplied by the fountain of the virgin." Godet says that Israelitic consciousness had been struck by the fact of this spring flowing from the Temple hill, and had attached a Messianic significance to it. (Westcott and Hort substitute for "*anointed his eyes*," etc., "*spread on his eyes*," etc., so ver. 15; there is also a minor variation in the rendering, as pointed out in R. V. *marg.*) *He departed therefore, and washed*, etc. The promptness of the obedience is measured by the immediateness of the reward. The obedience was that of faith, feeble as yet, but real; and the reward that which is always promised to faith, even feeble, if real.

(2.) 8-12. **The surprise and comments of the man's acquaintances.** One of those life-like scenes that are frequent in this Gospel, described to the evangelist probably by the man himself. 8. R. V. has the better reading, "that he was a *beggar*," for "that he was *blind*:" he begged because he was blind. 11. Read "the man that is called Jesus," instead of "a man," etc.; see v. 13. This section serves as an introduction to the following.

(3.) 13-34. **The inquiry and investigation by the Pharisees, and their action.** *The Pharisees*, not probably the Sanhedrim, cp. vii. 45, xi. 47; perhaps the elders of the synagogue to which the man belonged (the *kirk-session*), for they finally excommunicated him, ver. 34. First the examination of the man himself. Then that of his parents. Then a second examination of the man, with his excommunication. It was natural in one way to report so strange an event to the religious leaders. Perhaps the motives were not friendly altogether. The man's ignorance of Christ's whereabouts may have excited suspicion, and the mention of the Sabbath as the day on which the miracle was wrought points to a certain officious zeal on the part of these people. It was likely done in the spirit of men who think there is something to be inquired into rather than something to thank God for. 14. *It was the Sabbath*; cp. ch. v. 9. 15 f. The division of opinion about Jesus which obtained among the common people, see ch. vii. 43, appears among the

- 15 clay, and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.  
 16 Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And  
 17 there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened

Pharisees themselves. After getting the man's account of his cure, one party held that the circumstances of the miracle amounted to a breach of Sabbath law, hence Jesus could not have a mission from God (read *from* God). As the carrying of his bed by the impotent man of Bethesda, ch. v., fell under Sabbath prohibition, so, it seems, special precepts forbade anointing the eyes with spittle; certainly the whole process of cure would be sure to be contradictory to one or more of the Pharisaic traditions. Another party inquired how one who had not come from God, or who was a transgressor of law, could do such signs. It is almost incredible that men could be found in presence of such a marvel of power and beneficence, which they were unable to deny, to harden their hearts, and shut their minds against entrance of the truth; cp. v. 16. But prejudice and jealousy can set aside cogent proofs, and easily discover some plausible pretext for opposition in the most righteous cause or person. The party who sympathized with Nicodemus (vii. 50)—perhaps Nicodemus himself was the interrogator—suggest a difficulty. How can a man who despises the law of God do such deeds—unequivocal signs of God's power and mercy? They infer from the miracle the mission and character of the worker of it. Apart from the supernatural powers in it, the pure beneficence could hardly be a finger-post pointing downwards for source. The argument in favour of a Divine origin, not from the merely miraculous, but from the design and scope of the miraculous as well, is an instinctive sentiment; see ver. 31 f. 17. *They say therefore*,—probably the ill-disposed to Jesus (see ver. 18), who, because of the question put by the other section which they could not answer very well, are anxious to get the man's own opinion of Jesus,—*What dost thou say of Him, in that?* etc., with some sinister intention doubtless to prove collusion, or to have ground according to their decree, ver. 22, for dealing summarily with the man. *He is a prophet*, and therefore from God. The man took his stand on the O. T. revelation. Jesus was to him another Elijah or Elisha, one whose works had the stamp of a Divine source on them. We may be inclined rather to accept the miracle for the sake of Christ's person, as our belief in the O. T. revelation is founded on our belief in Christ. We come to the Old Testament now through Christ and the New Testament; this man was coming to Christ through the Old Testament. Hence the need for Jesus to establish in these ways a connection with the old lines of belief in order to introduce the true conception of Himself to men, who had some idea previously of what the worker of such miracles might be, in respect of Divine authority; but had an imperfect conception of One who should be holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. This glorious conception, now that we can grasp it, as Jesus exhibited it personally, embraces everything else; the most marvellous miracle of all: and the others are only subordinate.

18 thine eyes? He said, he is a prophet. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that  
 19 had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now  
 20 see? His parents answered them, and said, We know that  
 21 this is our son, and that he was born blind: but by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age, ask him; he shall speak  
 22 for himself. These *words* spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of  
 23 the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age, ask  
 24 him. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man

18-23. The Jews confront him with his parents, desiring to convict the man of falsehood. They ask if this was their son, if he were born blind, and how he received sight. The parents acknowledge their son, and testify to his congenital blindness, but they cautiously decline to say anything about the miracle. They say they know neither how it was done nor who did it (note the emphatic pronoun, "*We do not know*"),—a declaration which, in the light of the evangelist's commentary, ver. 22, we must take as meaning, in strict truth, only that they had not seen the miracle done, and that their testimony could be only second-hand, and they did not wish to be implicated in the matter. They felt that it was unreasonable they should be questioned as to the case. Their son was of age to answer for himself. They declined responsibility in denying knowledge of the circumstances. A safe and skilful, if not altogether a courageous course. It was prudent, if not very heroic. For a son they might have risked their own reputation. Like the Pharisees, ch. xii. 42, they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God. 22. *The Jews had agreed*: either in Sanhedrim or in secret conclave, the former probably, as the thing was known. *Put out of the synagogue*, xii. 42, xvi. 2; Matt. xviii. 17; excommunication from church fellowship, and along with that went forfeiture of ordinary social fellowship for a longer or shorter period. There appear to have been different degrees of severity in this sentence, but possibly dating from after this time.

24-34. Re-examination of the man. Foiled in their attempt to convict the man of falsehood by the testimony of his parents, the Jews turn once again to the man himself, and solemnly adjure him to speak truth in God's sight, for *they* know that Jesus is a sinner. *Give glory to God*, as in Josh. vii. 19, means "make confession before God of the lie or deception practised." *We know*, etc. Their authority must be taken as final. But the man as yet declines one way or other to give his opinion as to Jesus' moral character; he keeps to the fact, the one thing he knows, that once having been blind, now he sees. In the hope of still detecting some inconsistency in his story, the Jews re-examine him, requesting him to tell it again. The man's patience is exhausted, and his indignation and contempt roused at being thought an

25 is a sinner. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner  
*or no*, I know not : one thing I know, that, whereas I was  
 26 blind, now I see. Then said they to him again, What did he  
 27 to thee ? how opened he thine eyes ? He answered them, I  
 have told you already, and ye did not hear : wherefore would  
 28 ye hear *it* again ? will ye also be his disciples ? Then they  
 reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple ; but we are  
 29 Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses : *as*  
 30 *for this fellow*, we know not from whence he is. The man  
 answered and said unto them, Why, herein is a marvellous  
 thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and *yet* he hath  
 31 opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not  
 sinners : but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth  
 32 his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not  
 heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born  
 33 blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

impostor, at their suspicions, and their invincible prejudice. He answers with sarcasm : Why, having once heard the story and disbelieved it, do they wish to hear it again ? It cannot be, surely, that they wish to become Jesus' disciples ? *Ye did not hear* : a common way with this evangelist to put the means for the effect, the hearing for the consequence of hearing, receiving, believing, etc. ; so vi. 60, viii. 43, 47. 28 f. The words expressing their ridicule are full of emphasis : *Thou art a disciple of that man ; but we are disciples of Moses. We know that to Moses God has spoken : but as for this man, we know not whence he is !* As in ch. viii. 33, they boast of their physical descent from Abraham—"We be Abraham's seed," so here they boast of having Moses for spiritual teacher ; on the validity of which trust see v. 45 ff. *Whence he is*, and therefore the source of His mission is in doubt. They could, however, when it suited their purpose, tell whence He came, vii. 27 f. Compare His refusal to answer Pilate's interrogation, xix. 9, and viii. 14, 23. 30 ff. The man speaks out his mind at last. *Why, in this is the marvel, that ye [of all persons] know not whence he is, and he opened mine eyes !* It appeared more marvellous to him that men should question the source of such power, than that such power should be manifested. The "marvel" was not the opening of blind eyes, but the ascription of such an act to evil agency. As we would say now, the wonderful thing is, not that proofs should exist that there is a God who rewards those who diligently seek Him, but that men should exist who dispute it. An unbelieving mind, an unresponsive heart, are the enduring objects of astonishment to the faith which clings to God. The man declares his creed—(1) That God does not hear sinners ; (2) That God does hear those who fear Him and do His will ; (3) That this miracle is without a parallel ; and (4) Hence the conclusion follows that Jesus was from God, otherwise no such power could have been exerted by Him. "A God-fearing and upright man," ver. 31. The word "God-fearing" occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, but the noun occurs in 1 Tim. ii. 10. He puts in a more emphatic way the sentiments of the unprejudiced party of the Pharisees, ver. 16. His creed was such as one would

- 34 They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.  
 35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son  
 36 of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I

expect from an intelligent, true-hearted layman, taking facts as they were, and their plain inferences, apart from subtlety or sophistry. A miracle like that, as to its nature, pointed Godward, and the instrument could be no sinner. No criticism could impugn these two conclusions, and they are strong enough to bear up the whole Christian argument. Note (1) the secondary meaning of "hear," and see above on ver. 27; (2) The Old Testament basis on which the man's certain conviction that God hears sincere prayer and rejects the appeal of ungodly men rests, Job xxix. 9 ff.; Prov. xv. 8; Isa. i. 15 ff.; Ezek. viii. 18; Micah iii. 4; Ps. lxvi. 18, xxxiv. 15, etc.; (3) Read *from* God for *of* God, vi. 46, vii. 29, ver. 16; signifying *mission*, not *personal source*. 34. The Pharisees could not answer the man's argument, but they could make him feel the full weight of their resentment at his assuming any right to teach them. *In sins thou hast been born altogether, and thou teachest us!* see ver. 2. The "altogether" includes both physical and spiritual effects. *Cast him out*; see ver. 22; probably a forcible bodily ejection, signifying, of course, excommunication, 3 John 10.

(4.) 35-end. The man's confession of Jesus. — *Jesus heard* — and *finding him*. Time when being indefinite; not necessarily the same day. The "finding" implies seeking, cp. ch. i. 43. Jesus appears to have heard through ordinary channels. This evangelist usually emphasizes His independence of these.

*Dost thou believe on the Son of God?* (Westcott and Hort read "Son of man," and *margin* of R. V. mentions this as supported by many ancient authorities. The other seems the more probable.) The emphasis laid on the *thou* suggests the contrast with the unbelieving Jews, and might be rendered, "You believe, then, in the Son of God!" in recognition of a fact rather than an interrogation. Note the very liberal inference Jesus makes from faithfulness in that which is least. As to the significance of the phrases "Son of God" and "believe on," etc., see notes on previous chapters, i. 34, iii. 18, 36. How Westcott can say, "For the first time the Lord offers Himself as the object of faith," with ch. vi. and even ch. iv. before him, it is difficult to understand. The man must have been acquainted with the general conceptions entertained about the Messiah, and the names applied to Him in common speech. The reply: *And who is he*, etc., may be taken as meaning either that the man recognised the designation as Messianic, and desired simply to know to whom it was to be applied, or that he was ignorant of the precise significance of the expression. Either *where* is, or *who* is, the Son of God? Probably the former, as the words, "that I may believe in Him," seem to warrant the interpretation, "Were He only made known to me, I should indeed believe in Him! Oh that I knew where I might find Him!" The *will* to believe existed, and also the acceptance of Jesus, at least as one who, coming from God, was able to point the way to the Son of God. More than this Jesus did not ask; to have so much was enough for the present. *Thou hast both seen Him*, etc.; see iv. 26.

37 might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast  
38 both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he  
said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

39 And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world,  
that they which see not might see; and that they which see

*Lord, I believe; and he worshipped Him.* Being ready to take the testimony of Jesus as a prophet concerning the Son of God, the man takes Jesus' testimony concerning Himself. How much was contained in this faith may be answered by Christ's own words, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed," etc. Certainly not all that we understand by doctrinal faith in the Son of God, which could not have been as yet, but this would have been of far less consequence than the moral attitude of the man to Jesus Himself. *He did believe in Jesus*, in the simple untechnical sense of these words, and therefore was prepared to accept presently whatever truth Jesus might reveal to him about God and Himself. The *worship* was that, therefore, of deep personal reverence for Jesus' character and accredited Divine mission, perhaps not easy to be distinguished from reverence for God in the circumstances. A solid basis for future building. (Note, this act of worship spontaneously paid seems to tell against the suggested reading in ver. 35, "Son of man." To say that the words "Son of man" must have suggested to him one who being man was the "hope of man," is to transplant the man out of his surroundings to those of the nineteenth century.) *For judgment I came into this world—blind.* One of those profound parabolic sayings of our Lord that cover wide reaches of application, Matt. ix. 12 f., xi. 25; 1 Cor. i. 18. The immediate suggestion is, that the Pharisees, who boast themselves on their spiritual knowledge and discernment—*they who see*—shut their eyes to the light of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ, and their knowledge becomes a veil, hindering light; as for the ignorant, like this blind man, called accursed and sinners by those who professed to be their spiritual guides and despised them—*they who do not see*—if ready to accept the truth which Jesus sets forth, their very ignorance becomes salvation. But the contrast is far wider than between the enlightened Pharisees or ignorant multitudes, it is that between those who think they need nothing, like the Laodicean Church, and those who feel and confess their spiritual poverty. And Jesus declares that His appearance in this world has a twofold effect—men are being sifted, separated into two great groups; it is the means of passing judgment on men, testing their desire and moral capacity to see; bringing out the power of vision in the eye blind by circumstance, but not loving blindness; exposing the blindness in the eye that seems to see, yet is dark, and loving darkness (see iii. 19 ff.). The revelation of God in Jesus Christ appeals to the great moral instincts of mankind. Where truth, purity, and love are revered, Christ must be revered. Hence many received Jesus, who in their own estimate and that of others were *blind*, ignorant, and far from righteousness, but whose consciences at least were not perverted; like this man, they were sure that Jesus must be a prophet come from God because of His words and deeds. Christ was and is the Light of God to many a dark soul living in darkness, oppressed with it, yet not able to free himself from it; hating it, yet yielding to its power; as to many a one laden with human traditions, labouring in vain, and to many a one longing with good and pure conscience for the salvation which he knows can

40 might be made blind. And *some* of the Pharisees which were  
 with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind  
 41 also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should  
 have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin  
 remaineth.

never come of himself, Matt. v. 3 ff., xi. 28. They who do not see—see. Hence it is the condition of receiving the salvation of Christ that one has to feel and confess that apart from Christ he is, and must remain, spiritually blind. “The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind.” But where Christ is not welcomed as the true and only Light of God, from whatever cause, intellectual or moral, or both, because of spiritual pride or self-righteousness; where utter and absolute need is not acknowledged, or need of Christ is not admitted,—the penalty is that the moral and spiritual vision grow dark, Isa. vi. 9. “If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.” “If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” One who does not see the sun when it shines is blind. One who does not accept Christ as God’s full message to men is also blind; and refusing to admit his blindness, the judgment is that he becomes hopelessly impenetrable by the Light of God. Observe the significant change: “Those who see not”—“blind.” The organ of vision, in the one case, not hopeless; in the other, destroyed. The judgment then is twofold, a judgment that saves and a judgment that condemns. The darkness must be judged in one’s own heart before the heart can turn and embrace the light. We are saved by judgment. Otherwise we must be judged as part of the darkness itself. In no case can it be thought that a man is saved by Christ because he personally deserves it, cp. 1 John i. 8 ff. No salvation without judgment is the invariable rule. (The word for *judgment* occurs in this passage only. The word used in iii. 19, v. 24, etc., means the process; this, the result.) Judgment, though not personally exercised by Christ (viii. 15, iii. 17), followed inevitably His appearance among men. Read, *Those of the Pharisees who were with Him*. The Pharisees felt the point of Christ’s saying was against themselves. They retort, *You do not mean that we too are blind?* Jesus replies by a personal application of the enigmatic truth He had just uttered, *If ye were blind—remaineth*. In their own opinion they were the only persons who *saw*, i.e. who had spiritual knowledge. This fact proved them to be blind really, but ignorant of their blindness, and therefore of their sin. Jesus makes a play on the word, meaning blind in their own estimation, to their own consciousness, as they were to their own consciousness men who saw. *Ye say, We see*. All men are by nature blind until the Holy Spirit shines into the heart and opens the eye of the soul to the things of God and His Son, and the personal sense of blindness is nothing else than one of His first movements towards that end. The words, *Ye would have had no sin*, are not, of course, to be taken literally. Such profound paradoxical words of our Lord can never be so taken. The startling, seemingly impossible antithetic sayings which often fell from His lips were meant to live in the minds and memories of men, provoking inquiry as to their significance. If you were blind, Christ says, if you had the consciousness of need of a light from God to guide you, and were stripped of that sense of religious superiority which rejects every light but your own, then, indeed, you would be feeling the burden of your sins, and seeking the mercy and pardon of God, which would

not be withheld from you. Some prefer to interpret thus: If you were really blind, if you did not have the light which you do have, if you were not sinning against your light, you would not have sin, the sin of rejecting me. Lack of responsibility would be lack of guilt. But, claiming to see, and possessing a light that ought to point you to me and draw you, yet refusing to follow that, your sin abides upon you. You say, We see, yet you do not follow the Light of life. ("Blind leaders of the blind," Matt. xv. 14.) The phrase "your sin abides" would seem rather to favour the former, sin being sin in general (sin of misleading the blind as well), not only the sin in particular of rejecting Christ. Besides, the whole language of Christ implies that the sense of being without light leads to Himself; it is not that the non-possession of light is an excuse for unbelief. This is far from the thought of the passage.

**Note on the whole chapter.**—1. The connection with the previous dialogue is obvious, as already hinted at on ver. 5. It was fitting that a practical illustration of Christ's power over the miseries of this life should follow such claims as those made, ch. viii. 12 ff. If the objection be raised that this savours more of literary expedient than of historic fact, we refer to Christ's own words, ver. 3. All that Jesus declared of Himself in ch. viii. here finds an actual enforcement. He is the Light of men, to bring them to the truth of God, to deliver them from the darkness of spiritual ignorance and the darkness of moral corruption, as from the darkness of all those sufferings which have come in the wake of sin. And the one is not complete without the other. It was indispensable that the Revealer of the truth of God, of the Father, of Sonship, of spiritual freedom, of an endless life, should be also sympathetic with human woes, and capable of removing them. The gospel of the kingdom embraces a man's eternal relations to God the Father, and his relations to this present world as well. To relieve suffering is the mark of Christ's discipleship, ver. 4, "We must work," etc. 2. The gradual rise in the man's faith in Jesus is to be noted (cp. ch. vii.). His first confession of Jesus is that He is a prophet, ver. 17; His second, that He is from God in a special sense with a mission of peculiar power, ver. 30 ff.; His third, that He is the Son of God, ver. 38. By little and little men are often drawn to the full and absolute trust in Christ that gives repose to the whole soul. If men make the first admission, they are on the high road to the last, and should be dealt with gently as learners. The Spirit of God can do His own work. The great condition is an open mind, an unprejudiced heart, and a pure conscience. 3. Christ's method with this man was striking. Having expressed His tender interest in him, and given him directions, He left him to himself. He did not lie in wait for him as he came back from Siloam and urge His personal claims. Even the Son of God does not usurp the Spirit's office, does not override a man's own reflections and judgment. Events led the man on. Opposition, suspicion, denial of his identity and truthfulness, denial of the miracle, denial of Jesus' Divine mission, his isolation when even his parents stood neutral, and finally his excommunication, combined to bring the work of grace begun by Jesus to its completion in the confession, "Lord, I believe," etc. The work of grace cannot be hurried; it is not hindered by the unlikeliest circumstances; the things that seem to quench it are made to foster it. 4. Wonderful as was the light of the common day to this man, more so was the light of the salvation of Christ shining into his soul. The one led to the other, but it might not have done so. He might have forgotten the Giver in the gift, the spiritual in the

CHAP. X. 1. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not earthly. Often in blindness he had thought of bodily vision as the best of God's blessings. When this is given, he is himself brought to feel that it may be a curse, and is so when the eye of the soul is fast shut against the light of God. The very mercies of God in our lives may darken our eyes to the Saviour's claims. 5. When cast out, Christ found him. Had men welcomed him, congratulated him, received his story as true, made much of him, all this might have been a barrier in the way to Christ, as earthly friendship often is. At the point of our greatest need Christ finds, and we are ready to be found. Short of extremity, we do not care to be found. Our own great need and Christ's great love meet. He has come that those who do not see, and know they are blind, and miserable, and naked, and poor, may receive sight and all things from Himself. We must be cast out of every confidence,—hope, good, strength, if we are to find Christ. 6. Christ's question is remarkable. No word of comfort for his trial, no congratulation as if nothing mattered much since he had sight restored. Spiritual issues were of infinitely greater moment. "Dost thou believe," etc. To draw us to Himself, to impress us with the value of the soul, with the relative insignificance of the best even of earth's blessings so long as we are not in possession of the saving grace of God, to make men feel that whatever light they have shining all round them,—light to the bodily eye, light to the mind, light of outward joy and prosperity, there may be gross darkness in the heart, because the love of God in Jesus Christ is not there; that until we believe in Himself, as Son of God, we are and must remain in darkness, the spiritual darkness that will deepen into the endless separation from the light of God's glorious fellowship,—Jesus puts this question, emphatic, personal, urgent, "Dost *thou*," etc. And as immediate may be our own individual assurance of salvation if we accept Christ heartily. There was here, of course, a very striking preparatory work in this man's soul, leading to this completeness of trust. The great matter for each is to see that he is going on as the Spirit and his own conscience suggest to him, so as to be always ready with the needful response to Christ's call.

CH. X. The connection with the previous chapter is obvious. Jesus, in fact, continues His remarks to the Pharisees, occasioned by their conduct in reference to the man born blind. They claimed to be the expounders of God's law, the guardians of the theocracy, the holders of the keys of the kingdom, the spiritual guides of the people. In that capacity the man was brought before them. In that capacity they cast him out of the communion of the faithful. If that action of theirs were expressive of the Divine judgment, the man was in evil case. He had forfeited his name and place among the living in Jerusalem, was blotted out of the book of God. But that ecclesiastical sentence did not reflect the judgment of God. The Pharisees were neither true spiritual guides nor faithful exponents of God's will. Their sympathies were neither with those whom they professed to guide, nor with God in whose name they assumed the function. They cursed the ignorant and out of the way, instead of helping them to find it. They sought, not God's honour, but honour one from another. We might almost say Jesus would have pardoned their rejection of Himself had they shown sincere concern for the well-being of those of whom they were the self-constituted leaders. The subject of vers. 1-21 is the contrast between these false guides of the people and Jesus Himself, the true guide. And

the relations of a shepherd and his sheep are taken in allegory as a picture of the relations of Jesus to men. The subject is unfolded in a series of contrasts, the first (vers. 1-6) distinguishing in general the shepherd from the thief or robber by his entering into the fold through the door, and by his recognition on the part of the porter and the sheep. In the second contrast (vers. 7-10) Jesus introduces Himself directly, not, however, as the true Shepherd, but as the Door of the sheep, in opposition to all who came before Him. As the Door, He gives access to all the blessings of God's grace, to Messianic life, in distinction from the thief, who seeks the fold to enrich himself at the sheep's expense. And this leads to the third and chief contrast (vers. 11-15), in which Jesus declares that He is the Good Shepherd, in distinction from the hireling, by the two great facts of sacrificing His own life for the sheep, and of having a personal knowledge of them all. He then claims for this office a universal application, ver. 16; He is the only guide of men; claims a special relation to the Father in consequence of His discharge of this office, ver. 17; and claims a special value for this office on the ground of the unique authority which He possesses, ver. 18. At the close of this remarkable discourse the ordinary result followed, Christ's words sifting the hearers, vers. 19-21.

Cp. Ezek. xxxiv. ; Jer. xxiii. 1-6; Zech. xi. 14 ff. The words may have been spoken on the evening of the day when the blind man was cured; and the shepherds on the hills round Jerusalem may have been seen gathering their flocks home from their various pastures to their shelter for the night. But such an occurrence is hardly needed to account for the new turn Christ gives to His discourse. The thought lay near.

1-6. **First contrast.** The shepherd in distinction from the thief or robber is—(1) He who enters through the door; (2) he whom the porter recognises; and (3) he whom his sheep recognise.

*Verily, verily*, and at ver. 7, see on i. 51. Lücke remarks that this formula never introduces a new discourse, but connects what follows with what precedes. He sees no exception in iii. 3, vi. 26. It was usual for a number of shepherds to gather their several flocks into one resting-place for the night (an enclosure surrounded by a wall), entrusting them to the care of a watchman or under-shepherd, the *porter*, whose duty it was to guard the entrance of the fold until morning, when the shepherds passed into the enclosure again, called each his own sheep, which recognised his voice, and going on before them, led them to their respective pastures for the day. It is almost superfluous to say that under the figure of the "fold of the sheep," Jesus describes the Church or kingdom of God, which in O. T. times was identified with the historic people of Israel, though with a forward reference to the future. The phraseology is familiar in the Old Testament, Ps. lxxix. 13, "We Thy people and sheep of Thy pasture;" cp. Ps. lxxvii. 20, xcv. 7, c. 3. In Ps. lxxx. 1, God is appealed to as the Shepherd of Israel, who leads men like a flock; cp. Ps. xxiii. ; Jer. xxxi. 10; Ezek. xxxiv. 31; Micah vii. 14; and in Isa. lxiii. 11, the human instruments are themselves called the shepherds of the flock. This title the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel apply to the kings and rulers of Israel (Jer. xxiii. ; Ezek. xxxiv.), their civic chiefs; and denouncing their faithlessness to their trust, predict the appointment of shepherds according to God's heart, Jer. iii. 15, who shall feed the flock, Jer. xxiii. 4; the assumption by Jehovah of the office Himself, Ezek. xxxiv. 11 ff.; the setting up, finally, by God of "one Shepherd . . . my servant David," ver. 23. In the absence of political chiefs in N. T. times,

by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth ; and the sheep hear his voice : and he calleth

the spiritual guides of the Jewish people in the synagogues were known as *shepherds*. The *door*, entrance by which is a note of a shepherd, is, generally, the way appointed by God for the giving effect to His will regarding the interests of His people and kingdom ; and in particular the Christ Himself ("I am the door") as the way (ch. xiv. 6) to the Father,—the way by which God's purposes with His people should be realized, in whom these were summed up and completed. To *enter by the door*, therefore, is generally to have sympathy with the aim and will of God on the part of the men who sought to guide the people ; to seek His glory, not their own ; to rule in His name ; to reflect His character ; to renounce private personal interests for those of the kingdom, that is, of the people over whom they desire to stand ; and in particular to accept the full and clear declaration of God's will in the Christ. Had these self-appointed guides ever been in real sympathy with the will and the glory of God, they had accepted Jesus as their complete exponent. There never has been but one door into the kingdom of God. Because they sought and used place and power for themselves, as lords over God's heritage, not for God and men, they are called by Jesus thieves and robbers. And it would be no anachronism to condemn them for not having entered by the door—even interpreting the door as Jesus the Christ directly. For as the Christ has been always in the Church, and as the Scriptures of the Old Testament everywhere testify of Him (v. 39), the Spirit of Christ has been precisely that element in the past which gave light and won hearts, which also provoked the continuous carnal resistance to God. One is tempted for the sake of the spiritual teaching to read the fact of the incarnation, with all its gracious condescensions on the part of the Son of God, into the words—*he that entereth in by the door*, as if the humbling of Himself to take the place and way of the sheep, to come among them like one of themselves, were meant. The thought is a beautiful one ; but not the thought of the passage. *Climbeth up*. The Oriental sheepfolds were built with a high wall, to prevent the incursion of beasts of prey or even of robbers. *Thief and robber* : either stealth or violence. Read, *is a shepherd, or shepherd of the sheep* : the designation being general, and not as yet restricted to Christ. *The porter*, see above. The resemblance between the natural and spiritual cannot be carried into every detail ; so that it is perhaps unnecessary to ask who is intended by the *porter*. At the same time, one of the most common thoughts of this Gospel is the Divine seal which Jesus bears, witnessed in various conclusive methods, i. 33, 51, v. 32, 36 f., vi. 27, 45, and ver. 36 of this chapter. We may accordingly hold reasonably that the Divine recognition is to be thought of. The Spirit prepares the way of the Lord, and makes His paths straight ; cp. 1 Thess. i. 5 ff. and 9 ; Mark xvi. 20 ; 1 Cor. xvi. 9, "A great door and effectual is opened to me." Like the Master, the faithful servant can never be without the seal of the Spirit on his labour. To make John the Baptist the "porter," is to reduce allegory to prosaic fact, and to confuse the whole idea ; he is but one of the sheep who recognise the voice of the Good Shepherd. *And the sheep hear his voice*, etc. ; so ver. 27. Recognition by the sheep is the third note given of a shepherd. The

- 4 his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he  
 putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the  
 5 sheep follow him : for they know his voice. And a stranger  
 will they not follow, but will flee from him : for they know  
 6 not the voice of strangers. This parable spake Jesus unto

relations of shepherd and sheep in the East are peculiarly intimate and tender. The shepherd's call is recognised by his own sheep, for each of which he has a name ; they follow him as he leads them from the fold to the pasture, or from one pasture to another ; and him only they will follow : from a stranger's call they will flee, not recognising the voice. *Hear his voice* ; see note on ix. 27. The hearing implies the recognition of a familiar and loving voice. There is no compulsion or violence, as in the case of a thief or robber, Ps. cx. 3. *By name*. More specific than the general call of "his voice." As all the sheep know the shepherd, the shepherd knows each sheep. The tie is personal. The history of each sheep, its state, qualities, worth, age, are known to the shepherd, and its special name suggests his knowledge, interest, and affection towards itself. Read, *When he putteth forth all his own* ; as in R.V. : the inference being that it is His care to have His entire flock under His lead, not a single one is left behind. Referring back perhaps to the case of the man born blind,—“cast out” of the Jewish synagogue, but “found” by Christ and taken into His fellowship,—there may be in these two words, “leadeth out,” “putteth forth,” a suggestion of the separation which Jesus was now making between the true and false in Israel. There may be also a certain significance in the use of both words—the one implying a gentle, the other a forcible, moving out, Jude 22 f. *He goeth before them*, etc. The idea of our own familiar Scottish hill pastures, with the sheep scattered far and near over them, and the very general oversight of a shepherd, is to be put out of view. Conditions in the East were and are very different. A comparatively small flock, all under the shepherd's eye, kept well in hand, within moderate limits of distance, moving after him as he leads the way to other ground, or to the fold for the night,—this is the picture we have to imagine. It is impossible to overlook the allusion to the blind man and the Pharisees. These were the “strangers” from whom the man with the instincts of Christ's sheep flees. The application of these details and of the parable generally to Himself, Jesus makes in the sequel ; and we may omit it here, remarking only how perfectly He sets forth the remarkable relation of Himself and His people, their mutual knowledge, love, confidence ; on His side, continual care, protection, and leading ; on their side, joyful response and free obedience. The sketch is of the ideal Shepherd of men ; but that was filled in only by one, Isa. xl. 11. 6. *This parable*, rather *proverb*, as in xvi. 25, 29. The word means : what is out of common discourse (lit. a path beside the road), and is not that usually rendered parable, which does not occur in this Gospel : as this word used by John is wanting in the other Gospels. In John's view, every dark, veiled utterance of Christ was a *proverb*. The form in which these sayings are couched (“I am the Door”—“the Good Shepherd”) is perhaps more akin to the *allegory* than the *parable* ; but the allegory pure and simple is such as xv. 1 ff., “I am the true vine.” Lücke's distinction is good. The parable presents the kingdom of God under some single simple point of view—in respect of some special relation, or law, or contrast ; while here the whole relation of Messiah to the people is presented

them : but they understood not what things they were which  
 7 he spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again,  
 Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.  
 8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers : but the  
 9 sheep did not hear them. I am the door : by me if any man

in its manifold elements and references. *They understood not—them.* They failed to perceive the drift of the utterance. They could hardly recognise themselves under the title of thieves and robbers. But true spiritual sympathies would have enabled them in the light of O. T. passages to understand Christ's meaning ; cp. ix. 40.

7-10. The second contrast, in which Jesus introduces Himself directly, not, however, as the Shepherd, but as the Door of the sheep ; in distinction from all who came before Him, who, like those (ver. 1) who climb up some other way into the fold, are thieves and robbers. *Therefore* (R.V.), connecting with ver. 6 ; *again*, indicating a pause in the discourse. *Verily, verily* (see on ver. 1.), *I am the Door of the sheep.* The pronoun is emphatic. But we should have expected Jesus to have said rather : I am that One who enters by the door, and therefore the Shepherd of the sheep. Remark—(1) That making entrance through the door the prominent test of a true shepherd, it was natural to say what that door was. (2) And in identifying Himself with the door, Jesus elevates Himself above the general category of true shepherds : He becomes the standard by which a shepherd is recognised as true. He is something more than one of a class. None can be a guide of God's flock who is not guided by Christ Himself. And the fold is the fold because He is the Door. It is what the Door makes it, and no more. We are thus taken back to the fundamental thought : There is no fold, there is no sheep within it, there is no shepherd watching it, but in and through Christ Himself. The Church of God is founded on the promise of the coming Christ. All who, in the days of the Old Covenant, were within the kingdom of God were so because they were saved by their spiritual union with Christ, as all are who now believe in the Christ as come. There never has been but one and the same Door into the Church ; as never but one and the same Church. (3) By calling Himself the Door—not of the *fold*, but of the *sheep*—it is, perhaps, Christ's intention to emphasize the personal tie which binds Him to the sheep : the fold without the sheep being nothing. Personal confession of Christ is the rock on which He builds His Church. He is the Living Way, the access to the Father and to life. We become His sheep by recognising Him as the only entrance to life, and then by entering through Him. *All, as many as came before me, are thieves and robbers, i.e.* those who claimed an authority of their own over God's heritage ; who did not act as if they were only in possession of a delegated power ; who opened the door of the kingdom, or shut it, according to their own fancy ; Luke xi. 52 : "Ye have taken away the key of knowledge." They robbed both God of His prerogative and men of their birthright. Any one claiming to stand between Christ and men is therefore a thief or a robber. Every true guide confesses with the Baptist : "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven." *The sheep did not hear them ;* cp. ver. 5. Various meanings can be put on this—(1) Those ordained to life, the true sheep, could not be misled, however others might be duped, see ver. 26 ; or (2) those who had the preparatory work of the Holy Spirit, moving to humility, and desire to be

enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find  
 10 pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill,  
 and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and  
 11 that they might have *it* more abundantly. I am the good  
 shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

guided, like the blind man, *e.g.*; or (3) generally, and most probably, to indicate the harmony between the true instinct of man and Christ's voice, which is the voice of love and self-sacrifice. From the million voices of earth *His* voice is heard in the quiet of conscience, in the convictions of truth and duty, in the hour of sickness and of death. *I am the Door*. Emphatic reiteration. As He is the Door in contrast with those who falsely claimed to be so, ver. 7, He is the Door in special reference to the sheep. He holds this office not for His own interests, but for theirs. Entrance through Him secures safety, liberty of access, and full provision; cp. xiv. 6.—*Through me if any one enter, he shall be saved; and he shall go in and he shall go out, and shall find pasture*. To *enter through Christ*, implies recognition of Him as the way of salvation appointed by the Father, and submission to Him in penitence and faith. *Shall be saved*, which includes all else; but the negative conception, salvation from sin, is supplemented by the positive, *shall go in and shall go out*, etc.; cp. "If the Son make you free," etc., viii. 36. The people of God are not under lock and key, under legal restraints. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, is liberty. "We have access with confidence to the Father in the faith of Him." They live in a friendly familiar fellowship, as on a footing of abiding confidence; and there is a fulness in Christ for all their varied needs. The language is that of assurance, if the condition be observed. *The thief cometh not*, etc. The thief's object is to get; Christ's, to give. The gift of Christ is *life, and abundantly*, which sums up all the blessings of ver. 9. But in order to give life to the sheep, Christ must sacrifice His own.

11-15. The third and chief contrast: **Jesus as the Good Shepherd, and the hireling**. As the Good Shepherd, (1) He lays His life down for the sheep; and (2) He has a thorough knowledge of the sheep. The statement of the object for which He had come (ver. 10) forms the transition from the image of the Door to that of the Shepherd. The personal access to God's kingdom, the distributor of its blessings; He is also the very substance of the kingdom Himself, as personal relation to Him is the chief feature of the sheep. To be a sheep of Christ's, to know Him, to hear Him, to follow Him, is the kingdom of God come within the soul. Through Christ we reach Christ; Christ is the Way and Door to Himself. *I am the Good Shepherd*. The word rendered *good* (*kalos*) = brave, Scottice *braw*, used by John besides this context only at ver. 32 f. and ii. 10 ("Many *good* works," "the *good* wine"), denotes goodness allied with beauty; the fair soul within mirrored in the outward attractiveness and grace. Christ claims as Shepherd of men to embody all high, pure, and lovely conceptions; see Ps. xlv. The first characteristic of the Good Shepherd is that He lays His life down on behalf of the sheep. This phrase *to lay life down* (to put or place the life down, to stake the life, to pay it down), in Greek, is peculiar to John; vers. 15, 17, 18, xiii. 37 f., xv. 13; 1 John iii. 16. (In Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45, "to *give* His life.") The figure is perhaps the same as that of xiii. 4: "He riseth from supper, and *lays aside* His garments." *For the sheep*, *i.e.* on behalf of, for their benefit; Christ is not simply saying what any good shepherd will do in an emergency,

12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth  
 13 the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and  
 14 careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know  
 15 my *sheep*, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth

expose his own life to save that of his sheep; He is saying what He, as the Good Shepherd, will do: sacrifice His own life for theirs; for the gift of life and life abundantly to the sheep is made possible by the sacrifice of Christ's own. Their true life springs out of His self-sacrificing death. Jesus does more than preserve and protect the life already there; He creates life by laying His own down. The connection between the laying down of His life and the gift of life *abundantly* to the sheep is not explained. Why their life is in danger; what the danger is; why He must die in order that they may live; and why in dying He procures life for them,—are questions which were left to be answered in the maturer Christian consciousness; cp. Isa. liii. 10, and 1 Tim. ii. 6. One explanation is ready to hand if we regard the preposition *for* as equivalent to *instead of*.—12 f. The hireling, in contrast with the Good Shepherd. Instead of sacrificing his life for the sheep, he leaves them unprotected when danger threatens, because he has a mercenary spirit, and the sheep stand in no personal relation to him; his object is gain—nothing more. The first application of the words would be naturally to all who, like the Pharisees, claimed to be in a position of spiritual oversight, pointing out that the vital condition of that is self-sacrifice, bearing the burdens of others, shielding them from hostile powers, interposing at all personal hazard, loss of good opinion, popularity, life; subjecting personal interests always to the interests of others; sharing men's sufferings and sorrows, sympathizing with their efforts even when short of the mark; not standing aloof from them, even when their sin has brought the wolf of Divine penalty upon them, Heb. v. 1-3. But for all, the true life is the life ever laying itself down for others; it is the spirit of Him who, though rich, for our sakes became poor; that we, through His poverty, might be made rich. See again, 1 John iii. 16.

14 f. The second mark of the Good Shepherd is thorough knowledge of His sheep, based on loving sympathy. Read, *I am the Good Shepherd, and know my own, and my own know me: as the Father knows me: and I know the Father*. An advance on vers. 3-5, where mutual knowledge is also asserted in general terms of the shepherd and his flock. Here the degree of this intimacy is affirmed by Christ to bear resemblance to that remarkable communion between the Eternal Father and the Eternal Son; cp. vi. 57 and xv. 9. It is the knowledge of mutual love, trust, sympathy. The mutual knowledge of Father and Son is perfect in every respect. In fact, we have no language adequate to describe it; cp. Matt. xi. 27. Christ's knowledge of His sheep is perfect, as are His love to them and sympathy with them. It is a knowledge embracing and determining all their past and future; their gift by the Father to Him, their call, their faith and repentance, their experiences in search for and finding the kingdom, their present walk and conflict, their future glory. And this knowledge is individual and discriminating. He knows each one, calls each, cares for each, disciplines him, watches over him, prepares a place in glory for him; cp. Rev. iii. 12,

me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for

ii. 17. And this knowledge is in unspeakable love and tenderness, for it is that of One who was Himself tempted in all points as they. Then, on the other hand, there is the reciprocal knowledge of Christ by His sheep. In one sense imperfect, in another sense perfect, for it is based on the personal experience of His grace and love by which their faith is awakened, and the conscious relationship established between Him and them. The response to His call; the assurance that it is a call for them; the assurance that each responding to it has, that he himself is before the eye and under the rod of Him that telleth the flock; the deepening trust; the repose on Christ's wisdom and love; the sense of His indispensableness in all hours of this frail and sinful existence; the quickened apprehension of His will and purpose in the teaching of the Holy Spirit and of all providences; the absolute confidence towards which the soul strives and in measure attains, confidence even that failure and sin will not quench Christ's love,—these are the fruits and proofs of the knowledge of their Shepherd by the sheep. And we know ourselves truly only in Christ's knowledge of us. A perfect faith implies a knowledge which may be called perfect, as a child's knowledge of his father leading to trust, submissiveness, love, is perfect, and reaches a deeper stratum of the character than the most critical outward beholder can reach; as the blind man whose eyes were opened caught a glimpse of Christ's very heart and being when he said, "Lord, I believe," and worshipped Him. Christ's knowledge of His people is all-embracing. Theirs of Him is all-confiding; as His love of His Father, when He too had as man to be guided and to suffer, was that springing from absolute trust, surrender, love, dependence, and sympathy. His full assurance, His highest height of knowledge, was, "The Father loveth the Son;" and even so, His people's knowledge of Him is the knowledge springing also from self-surrender, obedience, love, and the persuasion that nothing shall separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus their Lord. And this mutual knowledge is the basis of the communion between Christ and His people. He knows them, and they know that He knows them, their inmost heart, so that man's imperfect communion with man, where love fails if knowledge grows, or knowledge fails if love grows, can be no analogy. The one analogy is: As the Father knows me, and I know the Father. It is the mutual knowledge, love, trust of a father and son, who are all in all to one another, *i.e.* a fellowship of love. A mystery, yet simple, too, to him who loves; for he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love; see Isa. xliii. 1, xlv. 4, and ch. i. 35-end. This complete oneness of Father and Son, moreover, is not an example only, it is the goal of Christian aspiration and prayer; see ch. xvii. 20 f. Once more Jesus repeats the first and greatest mark of the Good Shepherd, this time saying it directly (indirectly in ver. 11), *I lay my life down for the sheep*: as if it were the first and the last thing deserving to be said on the subject, proof of an incomparable love (xv. 13), the ruling note of the whole, first and last act in discharge of the office of the Good Shepherd, foundation of the office, sum and substance of it all. His knowledge of His people is crowned in His dying for them, "tasting death for every man;" and their knowledge of Him is in great part the knowledge of Him as dying for them; as it is, indeed, because He died for them that they know Him, and (Phil. iii. 10) that they are made conformable unto His death.

16 the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold :  
 them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice ; and there  
 17 shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father  
 love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.  
 18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I  
 have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.  
 This commandment have I received of my Father.

16. *And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold—shepherd.* The greater shepherds had several folds where different portions of their flock passed the night, but they were all united by day. When the night of division is passed, Jesus will gather and unite all, Jew and Gentile, who respond to His call, who are "the sheep of His pasture." Jesus is led by the mention of His death into a train of thought resembling that in ch. xii. 32. "I, if I be lifted up," etc., see Eph. ii. 14-18. He foresees and predicts the results of His death for men, claims to be universal guide, sees the breaking down of every "middle wall of partition," the establishment of a universal brotherhood of men named after Himself, bound together in and through Himself, the Elder Brother and Only Shepherd. *One flock* [not fold] *and one shepherd* (Ezek. xxxiv. 23 and 31). Observe (1) how all who were yet to be gathered into the kingdom are spoken of as already belonging to Christ : *Other sheep I have.* Also (2) how He claims to be the personal spiritual power calling and drawing men into His own fellowship : *Them also I must bring*, etc. And (3) how, in universal submission to Himself, men are spontaneously formed into a unity, the mark of which is that of possessing, and being controlled by, one spirit. Eph. iv. 4. *They shall become one flock*, etc. The source of their life and guidance is One. 17 f. Jesus claims a special relation to His Father on the ground of sacrificing His life,—the leading thought of the whole passage, which begins and ends it, and rules it. *Therefore doth the Father—Father.* Jesus in these verses affirms (1) that the object of laying down His life is that He may take it again. An advance on the previous thought of laying life down for the sheep that they might have life. The intermediate step is inserted, of taking His life again. The sacredness of His earthly life was with the view to the fuller, truer life beyond death, the inheritance of all who lose this present world to gain the other. His death was no inconsiderate act of impulsive affection. It was not a martyrdom, not an event standing by itself. It reached to an incredible result and value beyond. Jesus died in order to live again. Death was the gateway to the life He desired to possess. And, as already seen, this life on the other side of death, and gained by and through death, is a life which the sheep share with Him, ver. 11. The life won for them by His death is a life in communion with Him, the risen Lord, at the right hand of God. And (2) therefore, looking at this full and adequate discharge of the office of the true Shepherd of men, their guide from death to life, darkness to light, from hell to heaven, from sin to God, and not looking merely at one particular incident in it, however great, He is the object of the Father's love. To Jesus everything turned on His relation to the Father ; His Father's love sustained Him, as it was His reward, when as yet no response had been awakened in those for whom He suffered. Not a selfish joy either, for the Father's love to Him was reflected in His love to those for whom He died that they might live. The Father

19 There was a division therefore again among the Jews for  
 20 these sayings. And many of them said, He hath a devil, and  
 21 is mad; why hear ye him? Others said, These are not the  
 words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes  
 of the blind?

22 And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it  
 23 was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's

loved Him because He loved the sheep whom the Father had given Him to care for. Then (3) that His death was a voluntary self-surrender. *I lay it down of myself. No man taketh it [or took it] from me.* An important advance on ver. 11. Not the mere death, but the free surrender of Himself in love to death. He was not simply put out of the way; His death was not an unexpected termination of His career; not a mistake, not a thing He had not counted on, and would have avoided had He been able. Of His own accord, with full consent to the will of God, knowing what He had to endure and why, He permitted His enemies to take His life away. It was an offering and sacrifice of a sweet savour to God. He came into this world and took our human nature in order that He might die.<sup>1</sup> And (4) the inference was clear, that He had power (right) to lay His life down, and power (right) to take it again. None but the Lord and giver of life could venture to express himself in such words. No man has power over his life, still less power to raise it again when taken away. The former carries with it the latter. "I am the Resurrection and the Life," the resurrection because the life. His death, therefore, could not reach His true and eternal personality. He is Power over life and death, the Prince of life; and He has the keys of Hades and of death. The value and dignity of the life He laid down are to be inferred. And (5) that in Christ's consciousness of His position, the most absolute power and the most absolute submission coincided. *I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment I received from my Father.* When He is asserting the Divine prerogative as Prince of life and Conqueror of death, He is the obedient Son of His Father, carrying out submissively His commandment. The glory of God and the lowest humiliation and shame kiss each other. "We see Jesus, made a little lower than the angels on account of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." He speaks of His rights, He speaks of His humble duty. Supreme Lord, He yet must ever come back in loving dependence to His Father and His Father's will. That to die for the sheep was His Father's will, and that in doing it and suffering it His Father loved Him, were the last refuge and support of the Son of God.

19-21. Sifting of the hearers. *A schism again arose among the Jews*, etc.; see ix. 16, vii. 43. *He has a demon, and is mad*, viii. 48, vii. 20. *These sayings are not those of a demoniac. Can a demon open*, etc., ix. 16 ("How can a man, a sinner, do such signs?") and ix. 32; Matt. vii. 18. Fruit corresponds to root.<sup>2</sup>

22-39. Renewal of the discourse with the Jews. It is not possible to say with certainty which events are to be ascribed to the feast of Tabernacles, ch. vii. 1, and which to the feast of Dedication; whether chs. ix. and x. are

<sup>1</sup> Through the Eternal Spirit He offered Himself to God.

<sup>2</sup> Some expositors interpose a visit of Jesus to Galilee and Peræa between vers. 21, 22. The likelihood of its being mentioned, if fact, is a strong argument against the supposition.

24 porch. Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the  
 25 Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not; the works that I do in my Father's name,  
 26 they bear witness of me. But ye believe not; because ye are  
 27 not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my  
 28 voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give

to be taken as belonging to the latter, or only from this point onwards to the close. The occasion (vers. 22-24) was the feast of the Dedication (or renewal) of the Temple, a festival instituted by Judas Maccabæus, B.C. 167, to commemorate the purifying of it after its desecration by Antiochus Epiphanes (1 Macc. iv.). It was also called the feast of Lights, on account of the brilliant illuminations attending it. The time of celebration was about the middle of December, two months or so after the feast of Tabernacles, and it was kept through the whole land, and lasted for eight days. The season (*winter*) obliged Jesus to teach under the cover of "Solomon's porch"—a colonnade or portico on the east side of the Temple, and, on the authority of Josephus, so called because it was a relic of the original Temple built by that king. The hostile Jews, with sinister intentions, surround Jesus, and demand a categorical answer to the question, "Art thou the Christ?" (ver. 22; Westcott and Hort read, "*At that time was the feast,*" etc.). 24. *How long dost thou hold us in suspense*, R. V., lit. how long dost thou raise our soul, i.e. keep it in a state of tension? *If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly*. Jesus replied, that by word and work He had already told them with sufficient clearness, but they had not believed; in fact, they could not believe, because they did not belong to His sheep, vers. 25, 26. He then mentions the marks by which His sheep are distinguished, with the privileges He bestows on them, vers. 27, 28; and adds that they are the inalienable gift to Him of His Father, with whom He is Himself one, vers. 29, 30. 25. *I told you, and ye do not believe*, viii. 25, 45 f. *The works which I do—me*, v. 36, ix. 4, xiv. 11, xv. 24. 26. *But ye do not believe, because*, etc. (omit *as I said unto you*), viii. 47. The meaning would be simpler if the clauses were inverted. Ye are not of my sheep, because ye do not believe. The whole thought of the passage is based on a mutual understanding between Christ and His own. When He calls, they recognise His voice and follow Him. This receptiveness or responsiveness, which may also be called a sense of spiritual insufficiency, Matt. v. 3-6, is the same as *the being of God* (viii. 47). Why were they not receptive? What answer can be made other than Christ's own, Ye *will* not come to me that ye might have life, v. 40? The question arises, Who then are Christ's sheep? 27. *My own sheep—me*. The marks by which Christ's sheep are distinguished are three: (1) *They hear my voice* (vers. 3, 4, 14); (2) *And I know them* (vers. 3, 14); (3) *They follow me* (ver. 4). There is (1) recognition of Christ's voice as the voice of the true, Divine guide of life; the voice that speaks from the life, death, and resurrection of the Son of God; the voice of righteousness, truth, and love, compelling assent from conscience, heart, and mind. There is (2) the consciousness of Christ's individual knowledge of them; the discernment in the general call of the shepherd by each one of that which assures each that he is meant, singled out, invited—the recognition of the

unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither  
 29 shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which  
 gave *them* me, is greater than all ; and none is able to  
 30 pluck *them* out of my Father's hand. I and *my* Father are

personal call. And there is (3) the obedience of faith that results, submission to Christ's claims and will. Corresponding to these three marks are three privileges. 28. *And I give—hand.* There is (1) Christ's personal gift to them of life eternal. *I give to them life eternal* (ver. 10). There is (2) the assurance of eternal safety, so far as they may endanger themselves. *They shall never perish.* And there is (3) the assurance of being kept from every hostile power without. *No one shall snatch them out of my hand.* The parallelism of these two verses is recognised by most expositors, though there is not agreement as to the exact way of coupling the various assertions. Thus, to the recognition of Christ as the Divine guide is attached the gift of life by Christ Himself ; to the assurance of Christ's personal knowledge is attached the assurance of eternal safety ; and to the faithful following of Christ is attached the pledge of deliverance over all the powers which would seduce or drag them away ; see iii. 16. To the free gift of life Christ pledges continuance in the enjoyment of all its blessings, and conquest over all inimical influences. The doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints may be deduced. 29. Jesus crowns His description of the sheep and the enumeration of their privileges : *My Father, who has given [them] to me, is greater than all ; and no one is able to snatch [them] out of the hand of the Father.*<sup>1</sup> All that the sheep are, and all that they shall be, flows out of this original gift of them by the Father to the Son ; see vi. 37. They are dear to the Son as the Father's original possession and gift ; and as such they will have all done for them that the subjects of such Divine forethought and love deserve. They will be well cared for : they have the Almighty God for their Father, and in His hands they shall ever remain. Jesus returns them to the Father's hands, from which He received them, with the object accomplished for which they were entrusted to Him. The allusion to the excommunication of the man born blind is probable. 30. If such is the relation of Christ's sheep to the Father, the relation of Jesus Himself to the Father is expressed in these remarkable words, *I and the Father are one [thing]*. Christ's hand is God's. This is the climax of the previous statements of Jesus regarding His relations to the Father ; see chs. v. 20, 23, vi. 46, 57, viii. 16 ff., 55, 58 ; cp. also xiv. 9 ff. Observe (1) the prominent place of the personal pronoun ; (2) the distinct personalities ; (3) the unity, "one thing." What is the unity ? Unity of *power* (hand), to say the least. But the *power* of God in such a sense can be nothing less than God. Socinians maintain that the words simply mean, *I and the Father are at one*, and quote xiv. 28, "The Father is greater than I." Taking the peculiarity of the expression, *one thing*, along with the plain general sense of the passages alluded to, it can hardly be disputed that Jesus speaks from a consciousness of a oneness with the Father, which is not exhausted by such modifications as will, purpose, aim, sympathy, and the like. This oneness of the Son with the Father carries with it an essential condition of the Fatherhood of God

<sup>1</sup> The margin of R.V. has another rendering, *That which my Father has given me is greater than all*, which, though supported by ancient authors, and adopted by Westcott and Hort, bears its absurdity on its face.

31 one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.  
 32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you  
 from my Father ; for which of those works do ye stone me ?  
 33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone  
 thee not ; but for blasphemy ; and because that thou, being a  
 34 man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered them, Is it not  
 35 written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them

itself,—no Son, no Father,—Fatherliness otherwise not being the radical mode of Divine existence, origin of all, to which all must return : a supposition repudiated by the truest instincts of the heart. The perfection of God as Father is therefore guaranteed, as well as the perfection of the Son as God. This oneness also carries with it the grounds on which we accept Jesus Christ as the final and completed revelation of God and His will, and give worship to the Son as to the Father. The secret of the gospel's power is in the fact that He who was and is supreme humbled Himself to the shame of the cross for us ; see ver. 38. This is Christ's answer to the question of ver. 24, so plain in one way that the Jews had little doubt of His meaning. And an answer such as the case permitted. To have replied, "I am the Christ," would have been misleading, for there did not exist a common understanding between the Jews and Himself as to the signification of the Christ. He might fitly have said, What kind of Christ do you mean? do you wish? The kind of Christ He here claims to be—the Christ who reveals the Father to orphaned men, and bestows life in the grace of sonship to that Father on all who are willing to be the sheep of His pasture—was very far from being the Christ they looked for. 31. *The Jews took up stones*, etc., Lev. xxiv. 10 ff. It does not appear, however, that they did actually stone Him. His calm demeanour may have arrested them in the very act ; especially as they must have had to fetch them from some distance, their anger had time to cool. The verb, in fact, has rather the signification of *bearing, carrying a burden*, than of *lifting* or *picking up* ; cp. Matt. iii. 11 ; John xix. 17, xx. 15 ; Acts iii. 2, and, by metaphor, Matt. viii. 17 ; ch. xvi. 12 ; Gal. vi. 5, etc.

32–39. *Close of the discussion with the Jews.* Jesus inquires why they purpose to stone Him. They reply, For blasphemy. Jesus argues from the Old Testament, and again appeals for faith. 32. *Many good works—Father.* On the meaning of the word *good*, see on ver. 11. *For which—me?* Was Jesus affecting ignorance? He could not but know why they sought to stone Him ; but sorrowful irony, suggesting their cruel thanklessness, was not unbecoming on the lips of Christ. 33. *For blasphemy ; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.* The second clause explaining the first, giving the nature of the charge they bring against Him ; see v. 18. Blasphemy, as thus defined, is the arrogating by a man of Divine rights or glory, the infringement of Divine prerogatives ; cp. Matt. ix. 3, xxvi. 65. The original significance is *injurious speech*, in which sense the word is used with reference to one's fellow-men ; Matt. xv. 19 ; Eph. iv. 31 ; Col. iii. 8. Had the Jews been wrong in their inference from His words, ver. 30, it is not likely that Jesus would have let it pass without putting them right. 34 ff. *Is it not written—God? In your law ; law* standing for the Old Testament, as xii. 34, xv. 25. Jesus calls their attention to the passage in Ps. lxxxii. 6, "I have said, Ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High," and asks, if the word of

gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture  
 36 cannot be broken ; say ye of him, whom the Father hath  
 sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest ; be-

God addresses those to whom it came as *gods*, whether He is a blasphemer in calling Himself *Son of God*? Ps. lxxxii. appears to be a pungent remonstrance addressed to those exercising the judicial functions in Jerusalem. They are reminded that though their station is high, and they appear in God's place, exercising His authority, to ordinary men ("God standeth in the congregation of God ; He judgeth among the gods," R.V.) their office is not irresponsible, for God is an interested spectator of the proceedings in their court. They are solemnly adjured to abandon corruption, and to aid the poor against their oppressors. Yet the writer deems them hopeless—society is rotten ; and closes with the significant threat that though he has called them *gods*, their end shall be that of any common man. Ex. xxii. 28 ("Ye shall not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people") shows that men in such high station were so named as the vicegerents of God, clothed with His power, and representing Divine justice and truth. If the Old Testament, with its profound sense of God's incomparable majesty, did not shrink from calling such men gods, was He blaspheming in calling Himself Son of God? Christ's argument would seem to prove too much, making the dignity He claimed not an exclusive or unique thing. His intention probably was to arrest their attention on a passage which was in itself striking, and which suggested a deeper, freer range of thought than they had ever cared to explore. If it set them thinking with fresh unprejudiced minds on that portion of Scripture, and on every other, they might find that there were things there surpassing their conceptions ; that they were more jealous of God's apartness from man than God was Himself ; that the scope of the O. T. revelation was not foreign to the thought of such a relation between God and man existing, or in ideal giving force to existing arrangements, as amounted to personal union, or something akin to it. Besides, the reference to a psalm containing such a solemn rebuke of men in the position assumed by these Pharisees was not unintentional. It was a significant warning they might well give heed to. *And the Scripture cannot be broken*, see vii. 23, v. 18. Christ implies His own faith in the unity and the Divine infallibility of Scripture. The word is characteristic of John. The unique and exceptional position of Jesus was sufficiently guarded by the words : "Him whom the Father sanctified, and sent into the world," cp. xvii. 18, 19, vi. 27 ; Jer. i. 5. To *sanctify* or *consecrate*, used of the Father in reference to the Son, must mean the setting apart and endowing with all needful qualifications and gifts for the special mission of redemption. To sanctify, *i.e.* to make holy, signifies to cause to belong to God, and the nature of the relation implied will be determined by that which is sanctified. In xvii. 18 ff. Jesus prays that His disciples may be *sanctified* in truth, and adds that for their sakes He sanctifies Himself that they too may be sanctified. The self-devotion on the part of the Son to the great work of saving men was met on the part of the Father by special equipment for the task. The ordinary application of the term to the cleansing the heart from the pollution of sin is impossible here. Nor are we to limit the thought to Christ's human nature ; cp. vi. 69, the Holy One of God. *Sent into the world*, implying pre-existence ; see iii. 17, 34, v. 30, vi. 38 ff., 57, vii. 28 f., 33, viii. 16, 18, 29,

37 cause I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works  
 38 of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe  
 not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe  
 39 that the Father *is* in me, and I in him. Therefore they sought  
 again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand,  
 40 and went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where  
 41 John at first baptized; and there he abode. And many  
 resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all  
 42 things that John spake of this man were true. And many  
 believed on him there.

42, ix. 4, xi. 42, xiii. 16, 20, xiv. 24, xvi. 5, xvii. 8, 18, 21. (Two words are used for the idea "send," but apparently indiscriminately.) *I am the Son of God*; see v. 17 ff. An assertion, therefore, equivalent to "I and my Father are One." 37 f. Final appeal to them to believe in Him on the ground of His works, if for nothing else. *If I do not the works of my Father, do not believe me*; see on v. 36 as to the meaning of *works of my Father*. *Do not believe me, i.e.* do not believe what I claim when I say I am the Son of God, and that I and the Father are One. Faith in His word, not in Himself, is the point of His argument. If you will not take my word for it, then at least yield to the impression of the works. *But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works*. The works of Christ considered as revelations of the Father in Divine goodness and power went hand in hand with His word considered as revelation of His holy, sinless, perfect character; and the two cannot be divorced. But it was quite possible that the more striking and outward revelation might touch some natures, perhaps more than were impressed by the other and more spiritual revelation; cp. xiv. 11, xv. 24. These different sorts of faith, or more correctly, bases for faith, appeal continually to different temperaments. *That ye may know and believe* [*understand*, R.V.]. (The same verb used in different tenses, according to corrected reading; rendered by Meyer aptly, "that ye may attain to knowledge, and may permanently know," implying both the *act* and the *state* of knowing) *that in me is the Father, and I in the Father*. This is the aim which both of these *faiths* must have in view. The conviction awakened by Christ's personal character, that His word is to be relied on, that He is faithful and true, and the conviction awakened by His miracles, that He is God's power, are intended to lead on to a full and perfect recognition of Him as one with the Father. There is as if a threefold stage in the formation of such complete faith. Belief in the wonderful and fatherly works, belief in the perfect sinless character, belief in the absolute oneness of Father and Son, in nature, in purpose, in will, xvii. 21. 39. *They sought—hand*. He escaped, no one knew exactly how, vii. 30, 44, viii. 20. 40-42. Jesus withdraws beyond Jordan, but is sought after by many who declare their conviction about Him. 40. *He went away again*, etc.; see i. 28, compared with iii. 23. 41 f. *And many—there*. The remembrance of the Baptist was still fresh in this district, especially of all that he had foretold about Jesus; and their recognition of Jesus as the Christ seemed to them only fitting as a tribute to the memory of John, and a justification of their former belief in him. The way, indeed, in which they expressed their belief in Jesus appeared to be equally an expression of reverence for the

CHAP. XI. 1. Now a certain *man* was sick, *named* Lazarus, of  
 2 Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was *that*  
 Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his  
 3 feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Therefore

Baptist, though he did no sign, as having pointed to Jesus from the first. *Believed on Him*: the full personal faith. It may be intended to show the contrast between the men who believed on the testimony of the Baptist, even though no miraculous sign supported it, and those who would not believe either the word or the work of Jesus Himself. In this quiet retirement He was comforted by the faith of these simple-minded people, and strengthened for the final conflict and the cross.

9. *Results: Jesus raises Lazarus, and the Sanhedrim resolve on His death.*

CH. XI. While Jesus is resting in Peræa, He is summoned to Bethany by the distress of a family with whom He had affectionate relations. The remarkable relief which He gave them has its own special value in the record; but in the effect which it exercised on the intentions of His enemies, its influence in determining the end of Christ's earthly career was of the greatest importance. The chapter contains (*first*), The circumstances attending the miracle itself (vers. 1-44); and (*second*), the consequences, (1) as regards the Jews who witnessed it, some of whom believed (ver. 45), others of whom, in an evidently hostile spirit, reported it to the Pharisees, ver. 46; and then (2) as regards these religious authorities in Jerusalem, who convened a Sanhedrim at which Caiaphas made a remarkable declaration, and which resolved definitely to put Jesus to death; and then last, (3) as regards Jesus Himself, who again withdrew from public life in Judea, ver. 54; and (*third*), the gathering of the Jews to the Passover, and the interchange of views as to whether Jesus will be present, vers. 55-57.

The chapter opens with the mention of the sickness of Lazarus of Bethany, and the naming of his sisters, one of whom, Mary, was well known in the Church through the incident recorded of her, ver. 2.

Vers. 1, 2, we are told how the sisters send word to Jesus; of His reply, which seemed to be reassuring; and of His delay to go to them, vers. 3-6. Then Jesus suddenly proposes to His disciples to return to Judea, on which they express their surprise, and alarm for His personal safety. Jesus returns an enigmatical answer, implying the need for work while the day lasted, vers. 7-10. Jesus then announced to them, at first darkly and then plainly, that Lazarus had died, and His intention to go and raise him, which His disciples hardly understood, vers. 11-15. Thomas, fearing the worst, but loyal, called on his fellow-disciples to go and share their Master's fate, ver. 16.

1-16. *Jesus learns of Lazarus' sickness, and delays to go to him.*  
 1 f. *Now a certain man—sick.* We are told the name of the man who was sick, the village where he resided, and the names of his two sisters, of whom the evangelist speaks as likely to be well known to his readers, especially Mary, who had paid the tribute to Jesus that should be spoken of throughout the world for a memorial of her. It is presupposed that the incident which John himself records in xii. 3 ff. was already familiar in the Christian world, and therefore the existence of at least the oral reports of which Mark xiv. 3 ff., Matt. xxvi. 6 ff., give us an authentic form; cp. also Luke x. 38 ff. *Bethany, the village of Mary*, etc., distinguishing it from Bethany on the Jordan, i. 28 (R. V.). *Wiped His feet with her hair.* John alone (in ch. xii. 3) narrates

his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou  
 4 lovest is sick. When Jesus heard *that*, he said, This sickness  
 is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of  
 5 God might be glorified thereby. Now Jesus loved Martha,

this particular incident, which is wanting in Matthew and Mark; but cp. Luke vii. 38, where it is told of the woman who anointed Christ's feet in Simon's house; see further on xii. 3 ff. Bethany was on the eastern side of the Mount of Olives, and less than an hour's walk from Jerusalem.

3. *Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick.* The strongest argument they could use to induce Jesus to come, and the expression at once both of their desire and of faith in Him. They hoped and believed that Jesus would hasten to the relief of His beloved friend. The fact that the sisters knew where Jesus was proves intimacy.

4. *This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, in order that the Son of God may be glorified thereby*, ix. 3. For the phrase, "sick unto death," cp. 2 Kings xx. 1; Isa. xxxviii. 1. With John all things serve the glory of God—Father and Son. This answer of Jesus would be construed by anxious friends and by the disciples as an assurance that Lazarus should not die; but, as the death had taken place before, or at the least immediately after, the messenger's return, we must believe that Jesus, foreseeing all that would happen, intended these words to act as consolation to the sisters in the hour of trial, when their brother had died, and as a test of their faith in His love and truth. He refers to this in His interview with Mary, at the grave (ver. 40) recalling this message. They are words which are fitly spoken over every Christian death-bed, now that Jesus is Himself dead and risen. The limits of the Divine and human in our Lord are not easily defined, but the impression left on the mind here is that of absolute omniscience, as everywhere in this Gospel; and the simplest explanation is the profoundest after all, that Jesus spoke in full consciousness of the future, of the miracle, and of the results in the culmination of unbelief against Himself on the cross, through which His mission should be accomplished to the glory of His Father, xii. 23, xiii. 32, xvii. 1, 5.

5. *Now Jesus loved Martha*, etc. The verb is different from that used in ver. 3 and also ver. 36; and is the same which is always used (with one exception) of Jesus' love to John, xiii. 23, xix. 26, xxi. 7, 20. (The single exception where the other word is used is xx. 2.) This is the term used also by our Lord on the first two occasions of His putting the question to Peter: "Lovest thou me?" see on xxi. 15 ff. The distinction between the two words is, that whereas the one (vers. 3, 36), *philein*, Lat. *amare*, denotes natural affection, the love of relatives and friends, more spontaneous than otherwise, the other, *agapan*, Lat. *diligere*, denotes the consent of the judgment and will—what we understand by Christian love. The former is never used of the love of God to man, or of man's love to God (John xvi. 27 and 1 Cor. xvi. 22 are scarcely to be reckoned exceptions). The latter may include the former, but "the moral affection of conscious deliberative will is contained in it, and not the natural impulse of immediate feeling." From this verb the Bible writers coined the noun *agape*, to signify the pure and holy love inspired by the thought and love of God, a word which has on that account none of the taint of the heathen classic conceptions. There seems to be in this interjected remark something like an assurance conveyed that Christ's apparent indifference was not owing to lack of affection.

6 and her sister, and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where  
7 he was. Then after that saith he to *his* disciples, Let us go  
8 into Judea again. *His* disciples say unto him, Master, the  
9 Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither  
again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the  
day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because  
10 he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the  
night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

6. *When, therefore — days.* The *therefore* indicates that all His procedure, even the strangest part of it, was ruled by love to His friends. Yet, at the same time, did He not consider how this call of mere personal friendship, to which His whole nature responded, had to be reconciled with the interests of that work of redemption which He had come to effect? If He withdrew from Jerusalem in order to protect His life till the proper time came, the greatest interests might require delay, even at the expense of sacrificing the feelings of those He loved, and to the same extent His own. In the long run, the private interests of His disciples and the general interests of His kingdom must harmonize.

7. *Then after this—again*—and at ver. 11; see on v. 1.

8. Read as R. V. : *Rabbi, but now the Jews were seeking*, etc. Not anxious about Lazarus, and not connecting their Lord's purpose with his sickness, they wonder, and are alarmed because of the recent attempts on Christ's life.

9-11. Jesus replies to their question in two enigmatic utterances. Remember, they appeal to fear and to carnal motives.

(1.) 9 f. *Are there not — him.* By asking if there were not twelve hours in the day, Jesus meant to suggest either that His life was safe until His work was done, or that the opportunity must be taken when it presented itself, whatever the personal risk might be. Either, in fact, the day has twelve hours and no fewer, or the day has twelve hours—no more. I shall live out my whole day, or I have only my one day, and must catch its hours. The former makes a good interpretation enough. All, like Jesus Himself, have their day; all their twelve hours, however long or short their lives relatively; all have the full span allotted by God. Whether living to old age or prematurely removed, each has his twelve hours; a *full* day in God's purpose. The analogy of ix. 4 favours the latter, and so do the additional words in ver. 10. The "day" will accordingly mean, most probably, man's definite but brief opportunity, and Jesus would say, "Let us face our duty when the call of God comes, and while we may; the opportunity soon flits past; he who postpones duty because of risk, when he would do duty will find it hard. Dangers are on the road by day and by night, but walk by day if you wish to avoid them." The way of duty is ever the safe way; obedience to God's call is the inner light on the path. The difference between certain, sure walking in daylight, and an uncertain, stumbling, hesitating step in the night, is the difference between the opportunity taken, the duty done, the temptation resisted, when God presents it, though it costs much, and the duty attempted to be done, the opportunity attempted to be recalled, when the former vigour of conscience and energy of will have been weakened, when the moral ideal is nearly obliterated, through the consciousness of having quenched the Holy

11 These things said he: and after that he saith unto them,  
 Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him  
 12 out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he  
 13 shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they  
 14 thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then  
 15 said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am  
 glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye  
 16 may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. Then said  
 Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow-disciples,  
 17 Let us also go, that we may die with him. Then, when Jesus

Spirit in His day of grace; cp. xii. 35. Therefore let the day's work be done in the day, and each hour's work at its right hour. The morning hour has morning work; so with the noonday and afternoon. But woe to him who defers his morning work until the day declines and the shadows are stretched out. By *the light of this world*, Jesus hardly signifies Himself directly, as in viii. 12. The words are obviously figurative. Thus if the disciples meant there is ample time yet to allow hate to die down, Jesus would impress on them the shortness of His opportunity; it was needful for Him and them at once to walk. Instead of saying: He stumbleth because he sees not the light, Jesus puts the antithesis more sharply; because *the light is not in him*, probably with a shading from the figurative into the ethical; cp. 1 John ii. 9-11; certainly deepening the solemnity of the utterance. What though all outward means and privileges remain as before, if the power of benefiting by them be lost?

(2.) 11. The second part of Christ's reply is also enigmatic. After a pause, silence on their part natural: *Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go in order to waken him up*. Still "our friend," observe, death being no interruption in the communion of Christ, and Divine knowledge presupposed. *Fallen asleep*: the expression which was consecrated to the Christian's death, denoting the peaceful confidence of their end, and probably taken from Christ's own language regarding death, 1 Cor. xv. 6, 20; 1 Thess. iv. 13; Acts vii. 60. The metaphor must apply to the body's rest, not to the spirit, see Phil. i. 23. [Were the Jews accustomed to speak of death as a sleep? The Rabbins and Talmudists did so, but before or after Christ? cp. Job iii. 13; Ps. xiii. 3; Jer. li. 39, 57.] *Waken him up*. The disciples might have been struck with such an unusual utterance.

12 f. *If—saved* (marg. R. V.; *do well*, A. V.; *recover*, R. V.). John's explanation of this remark was natural after Christ's words in ver. 4.

14 f. Christ's plain announcement of the death of Lazarus, to which He adds that He was glad on their account He was not present. *For your sakes*, is explained by *in order that ye may believe*. He desired them to connect His voluntary absence with a purpose to strengthen their faith in Himself: how, should immediately appear. The testing and heightening of His disciples' faith in Himself, even through mystery and sorrow, gives Him joy, and His joy shall be fulfilled in them also, xv. 11. The training of the children of God has something infinitely higher than the avoiding of pain and discomfort. The bitter must come before the sweet. But Christ is glad; and so shall they be presently.

16. Then said Thomas—him. "Didymus" is the Greek translation of

came, he found that he had *lain* in the grave four days  
 18 already. (Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen  
 19 furlongs off :) and many of the Jews came to Martha and  
 20 Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then  
 Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and  
 21 met him : but Mary sat *still* in the house. Then said Martha  
 unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had  
 22 not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt  
 23 ask of God, God will give *it* thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy  
 24 brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that

the Heb. Thomas, meaning "Twin." Faithful to the last, but despairing and gloomy, such was Thomas ; see xiv. 5 and xx. 25 ff. He has no hope of Christ's safety, but he will die with Him.

17-44. Jesus' return to Bethany ; interview with Martha and Mary ; raising of Lazarus. 17 f. *Four days in the tomb*, so that Lazarus had apparently been dead when Jesus received the message. It is uncertain how long the journey took, as well as the precise time when the death occurred. The Jews interred their dead on the evening of the day they died. 18. *Fifteen stadia* (furlongs) : a stadium was about 600 feet =  $\frac{1}{8}$  of a Roman mile ; the proportion of an English mile being somewhat less. The past tense *was* may be inferred as denoting the destruction of Jerusalem (70), and possibly of Bethany with it. The elaborate and obtrusive ceremonials of grief and condolence, prolonged for a week, had brought many friends and acquaintances of the family from the city, who were not all friendly to Jesus. The impression left on the reader is that the family was in easy circumstances. 20-27. Christ's interview with Martha. The coming of Jesus was anxiously looked for still, and announced to the sorrowing family as good news. As head of the house, and most alive to outside interests, Martha first learns of Jesus' approach, and hastens, without telling her sister, to meet Him beyond the village ; while Mary, the deeper, tenderer nature, remains in the house, overcome with grief, and more occupied with the numerous, well-meaning friends who were endeavouring to console her. The implied characteristics of the sisters agree strikingly with those told of them in Luke x. 38-42. 21. *Lord, if—died*, and so at ver. 32 ; the exclamation constantly on their lips during the agonizing hours, and after it was all over : "If *He* only were here !" "If *He* only *had been* here !" They believed both in the power and love of the Lord. There could hardly be meant a gentle reproach in these words, for she must have known that even with the delay of two days Jesus could not have come in time to prevent the end. They are words of bitter regret. 22. *And now I know that whatsoever Thou shalt ask of God, God will give Thee*. Calvin : "She indulges her affection rather than contains herself under the rule of faith." Yet at the same time Martha has unbounded faith in the power which Jesus had with God ; cp. ix. 31. Not yet grasping the unique relationship of the Son to the Father, she must have known that He had restored to life some who were dead, and with His message (ver. 4) still lingering in her memory, she may have indulged the expectation of some great act of mercy. (Note, the Greek word for *ask* is that used in the New Testament for man's prayers to God, never used by Christ Himself of His prayers.) 23. *Thy brother shall rise again*. Christ's

he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.  
 25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he  
 that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:  
 26 and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die.  
 27 Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord; I  
 believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should  
 28 come into the world. And when she had so said, she went

first consolation, and the Christian's chief consolation evermore at such an hour. Although Jesus meant the miracle He was about to perform, as He had already foretold, ver. 11, yet the words could hardly excite such a hope in Martha's breast, and they were fitted to try her faith in Himself. Could she trust Him without a miracle, without a special kindness? 24. *I know—day.* The words *I know* suggest disappointment; she had been told the same thing often during these four days, but the last day was far off; had the Master no other and fresher comfort than that? For the belief of the Jews as to the resurrection, see ch. v. note. 25 f. *I am the Resurrection, and the Life: he that believeth on me, though he die, shall live; and every one who liveth and believeth on me shall not die for ever (shall never die).* Christ's second consolation. From the comfort of hope in a distant day of reunion at the resurrection, Jesus leads Martha to the comfort of faith in Himself. The words are in a paradoxical form. The resurrection is not a blessing apart from Him. Nor has He only power to raise from the dead and give life (v. 21 ff.). He is personally the substance of the resurrection and the life. The word resurrection is to be taken in its widest sense, so that it is true to say life results from resurrection, and resurrection from life, to the believer. He must share Christ's life in order to have the power within him of the resurrection from the grave to the endless life, and by sharing Christ's risen life now in faith, he is in fact risen with Christ, and independent of every future change, death of the body itself, and shall be kept from the endless death, v. 24. On Christ's personal identification with the blessing, cp. iv. 14, 26, vi. 35, viii. 12, x. 7, 11. Faith in Him, therefore, is a power that asserts supremacy over death; therefore over all sin and sorrow; see vi. 40 and viii. 51; 1 John v. 12. *Even should he die, he shall live, i.e.* his faith links him to the living, risen Saviour, and therefore the death of his body is but an incident in his experience, his real life continues, since the life of faith is "union and communion with Christ in grace and glory," xiv. 19. *Whosoever liveth, i.e.* in this bodily life; *shall never die, i.e.* shall not die the eternal death. In presence of Christ, all sin, sorrow, death are conquered, and He Himself is more than all His blessings. *Believest thou this?* that having me you have all? that to make sure of this life in Christ through faith is the first and great necessity, the life that overcomes the world's changes and death? 27. Martha gives her full confession: *I have believed that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, He that cometh into the world.* The perfect tense, as in vi. 69, points to past teaching, and experience, and conviction. Note the threefold designation of Jesus; and on *cometh into the world*, see vi. 14. She meant that He was the Messiah, and all that as a believing Jew she hoped for, on the faith of God's promises, here and hereafter, she looked to receive in and through Him.

28-32. Christ's interview with Mary. 28. *Secretly* may be joined with

her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The  
 29 Master is come, and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard  
 30 *that*, she arose quickly, and came unto him. Now Jesus was  
 not yet come into the town, but was in that place where  
 31 Martha met him. The Jews then which were with her in the  
 house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose  
 up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto  
 32 the grave to weep there. Then when Mary was come where  
 Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto  
 him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.  
 33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also  
 weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and  
 34 was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They say

*called or with saying.* His life was in danger. *The Teacher is here*: not the ordinary word *Master* or *Lord*, used often in the Synoptics, see i. 38, iii. 2, xiii. 13, xx. 16. 30. *Still in the place—Him*: wishing probably to remain quietly beyond the village, and give the sisters the opportunity of meeting Him privately, not embarrassed by the crowd of sympathizers. Mourners were accustomed to spend an interval at the grave daily. 32. *Fell down at His feet.* The finer and more sensitive nature of the two, as expressed in this action of profound respect and attachment for the Lord, and in her forbearing to utter the wish which Martha had not scrupled at once to urge. *Lord, if Thou*, etc., as at ver. 21, the one thing they could think of.

33-44. The sympathetic grief of Jesus, and the miracle. 33. *Jesus—troubled.* The effect which the great grief of Mary and her sister, and the crowd of sympathizing friends, also deeply moved, had on the Lord, is thus expressed, *He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.* *The spirit*,—not the Holy Spirit, but part of the Lord's human nature; so in xiii. 21, xix. 30. It is the inmost seat of His personality on the human side. The words show the reality and the tenderness of His human nature, its responsiveness to the sufferings and woes of life, as well as to the claims of personal friendship. No ordinary man could have been an unmoved spectator of the scene, and how much less He whose nature was perfect, strung to the finest issues by the Holy Spirit, who formed it! It is the truth which was so precious to the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, ii. 18, iv. 15, v. 7. *He groaned.* Some audible utterance of visible agitation of feeling. The word is used in Matt. ix. 30 and Mark i. 43, and rendered, "He strictly (sternly) charged (them)." Also in Mark xiv. 5, "They murmured against her." There would seem therefore to be in the term the idea of some strong emotion uttered, or partially uttered, in word or gesture, whether as an emphatic admonition or as subdued indignation. R.V. has the marginal alternative, "He was moved with indignation." It was partly the grief of sympathy with the sufferer, partly the grief of indignation at sin, and the miseries springing from it, which moved the Lord; partly, perhaps, the thought of His own death, the direct result of this miracle. 34 f. The graphic simplicity of this whole description, and the inimitable pathos, is the artlessness of the highest art, and is the guarantee of its faithfulness to fact. *Jesus wept*, Heb. v. 7;

35, 36 unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said  
 37 the Jews, Behold how he loved him! And some of them  
 said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the  
 blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?  
 38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave.  
 39 It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye  
 away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead,  
 saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath  
 40 been *dead* four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto  
 thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the  
 41 glory of God? Then they took away the stone *from the*

one of the places in Scripture where we must put the shoe from off our foot. Comment feels profane. Yet we may note here that this holy grief of Christ consecrates all our sinless earthly sorrows as we stand by the open grave. We might be tempted to say we would rather have the tears of Jesus at Lazarus' grave than the miracle itself, if it were not that the remembrance of His personality gives their value to His sympathy and His tears. Otherwise they were but "tears from the depth of a Divine despair." Nowhere is the Son of man more visible, and nowhere the Son of God, see on ver. 33. 36 f. The depth of Jesus' affection for Lazarus struck the friends of the family, and some thought that one who could give a blind man sight might have prevented a sick man from dying. 38. *Jesus therefore again groaning in Himself.* The most minute incident of this stupendous scene is engraved on the memory of the evangelist, so that as we read we feel as if we were spectators, following our Lord's every movement and gesture with an interest strained to the point of tension. *A cave, and a stone lay upon (or against) it.* Only the well-to-do had tombs hewn in the rock, see Matt. xxvii. 60. If the entrance were perpendicular, the stone would lie *against* it, as in the case of Christ's tomb apparently; if horizontal, *upon it.* 39. *Take the stone away!* The consciousness of authority is evinced in that simple command; also, we may infer, it was the demand for some act on their part, which would exhibit that measure of absolute obedience and faith toward Himself without which Jesus never could perform a miracle. And the test was not unnecessary. *Martha—days.* Her nature was impulsive, outward, unreflecting, guided by the feeling of the moment. There is therefore nothing inconsistent with her former utterance of unbounded faith in the Lord's power (ver. 22). She supposes that Jesus wishes to take a look at the remains of His friend, and, carried away by the circumstance, she forgets, if she really ever laid truly to heart, what she meant in her former expression of trust and hope. She was hovering between faith and despair. It is implied in what she says that no embalming had as yet taken place, though it may have been intended; see xii. 3, 17. "According to the Jewish custom of the time, bodies were washed soon after death, besmeared and perfumed with spices, also embalmed in honey, then swathed in cloth, and wound round with bandages. The corpse was thereby secured for a certain time at least from the process of decay" (Lücke); see xix. 40. 40. *Jesus saith—God.* Her faithlessness is rebuked by Jesus recalling the words of His message to them (ver. 4) when He first learned that their brother was sick; cp. ver. 26 f. *The glory of God.* All that Christ said or

place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up *his* eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.  
 42 And I knew that thou hearest me always : but because of the people which stand by I said *it*, that they may believe that

did was meant to promote this end, so at the last, xvii. 1, "Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." 41. *Then they took away the stone.* Omit the remainder of this sentence, (*from the place where the dead was laid*). And *Jesus lifted up His eyes*, xvii. 1, cp. vi. 5. A natural action, symbolizing the exaltation of God over all that is human and earthly, expressed also in the ascension, Ps. cxxiii. 1. *Father, I thank Thee that Thou hearest me.* On the simple appeal, "Father," see xvii. 1. To what does Jesus refer? To some specific petition addressed by Him to His Father in regard to this case, of which He had the assurance that it was granted? We can believe that the raising of Lazarus from the grave, in the foreknowledge of the Son of God, forming as it did the crisis of His activity and the crowning point of it, could not but be the subject of prayer to His Father (we can only speak after the manner of men), more urgent prayer than even was Christ's wont, not so much that power to perform it should be granted, but that in and with the performance of it the glory of the Father through the Son might be made conspicuous. There was regard in it to the sorrow of His friends, to whom He was tenderly attached; but the idea that He had besought the Father to grant this favour to Him for their sake is repugnant to our conception of the Son of man. Rather, as in the case of the miracle with which He began His ministry, He made the need of friends the occasion for the manifestation of His glory, ii. 11, combining the private interest with the general interests of the kingdom of God. Perhaps we may venture to say, then, that the very strength of Christ's desire to bring such comfort to His friends, the intensity of His human affection, might have appeared in the light of a temptation to gratify His merely human inclination, making Him, as having a human will to submit to the Divine, the more earnest in prayer for the perfect harmony of His will with His Father's. He is at this moment completely confident that He has the power and the sanction of God for what He is to do. Then we must remember that no miracle was performed by Jesus apart from the strong tension of moral and spiritual sympathy. 42. *But I knew that always Thou hearest me* (first personal pronoun—emphatic). If the human side of Christ's personality be presented to us in the previous clause, the Divine side is presented in this. The communion which Jesus had with His Father was complete and continuous. He was ever the Son in the bosom of the Father, i. 18. It was not to be supposed that Jesus had to ask special help in the doing of this miracle, as if it were harder for Him to do; the Jews themselves present thought differently, ver. 37; and there is no request for aid—simply thanksgiving for the assurance that He was heard. It was well, therefore, that this emphatic assertion of His unbroken communion with God, and of His personal confidence that His will and God's were always in accordance, should follow the utterance of thanks. He did not give thanks as if it were a thing specially to be acknowledged, an unusual thing that God had heard Him. It was the uniform consciousness of the Son of God that He and His Father were one, x. 30. *Nevertheless on account of the multitude which standeth around I said it, that they may believe that Thou didst send me.* Not being in the habit of addressing any

43 thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried  
 44 with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was  
 dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes;  
 and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith  
 45 unto them, Loose him, and let him go. Then many of the  
 Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which

personal appeal to His Father, outwardly at least, when about to do a wonderful work, His doing so, even in this simple fashion of thanking God for having already heard Him, might be misunderstood by His disciples and by others present, as if special difficulty were to be encountered, or as if He had specially to make sure that God was with Him. And so in the calm consciousness of His unity with God, of fulfilling the Father's mission and purpose, now as at all times, and in order that the beholders may be impressed the more with the fact that He is in such unbroken communion of knowledge, love, and power with God; conscious, too, of this supreme moment in His life, He thanks the Father for the opportunity given Him of setting forth the glory of God. 43. *And having said this, with a loud voice He cried, Lazarus, come forth!* (lit. *Laz., hither, out!*). Note, Christ speaks to the dead man, implying that he exists though dead; that it is with him directly He deals, whatever servants of the Divine will may be charged with giving effect to it; that he is not beyond the range of hearing the Son of God (v. 28 f.), not beyond the range of His dominion who has the keys of Hades and of death, Rev. i. 18. The authority of Christ therefore over the unseen world is hereby proclaimed. He is the Lord of life and of death, x. 18. The great antagonist of life, death, and he that has the power of death, are (Heb. ii. 14) subject to Him. The word of the Son of God was the creative word, i. 3, and it is the regenerative word, v. 24 f., and it shall be the resurrective word, v. 28, of which the pledge is here given. 44. *He that was dead came forth bound feet and hands with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin.* The human spirit, the person in the abode of the departed, heard the voice of the Son of God calling to Him, and reanimated the body which had been left behind, and brought it out again, the entire personality, body and spirit, in life and health. The mention of the grave-clothes, and especially of the bandages that swathed the limbs, is important, as showing that there was no forethought on the part of the sisters of any such deliverance, no tampering with the body, and certainly no collusion. The objection how Lazarus could come forth from the tomb with *his feet and hands bound* (tightly swathed), may be safely left to answer itself. The fact that he did so was a speaking testimony to the reality and genuineness of the miracle. *Jesus saith to them, Loose him, and let him go.* Eager, loving hands would soon accomplish this, and the most sceptical spectator prove for himself that the Creator and Redeemer of men was standing before him. The reticence of Scripture over the feelings of Mary and Martha at this unutterably joyful moment is admirable; so is its reserve on the momentous facts experienced by the raised man beyond the verge of this life. (See Tennyson, *In Memoriam*.)

45-53. Effect of the miracle on the beholders, and on the Pharisees and priests of the Sanhedrin. The usual result followed, so often recorded in John: the double line of belief and unbelief, accentuated in proportion to

- 46 Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.
- 47 Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.
- 48 If we let him thus alone, all *men* will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and
- 49 nation. And one of them, *named* Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all,
- 50 nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

the greatness of the occasion. 46. *But some—done*, with sinister motives no doubt, cp. ver. 37, and to curry favour. 47 f. A special meeting of the Sanhedrin is convened to determine what is to be done. *The chief priests and the Pharisees*: the former preponderated, vii. 32 and 45, i. 19. Their opposition to Jesus hitherto had been rested on religious grounds, see chs. v., vii., viii., ix., x., because prompted mainly by the Pharisees. The Sadducees, however, think it is now time to act, and only on political grounds was it likely that they would ever have cared to take action. *What are we doing—nation*. The question betrays the Pharisaic origin. It indicates belief in miracles, and irresolution. Both parties, Sadducees and Pharisees, were afraid of a national popular movement to make Jesus Messiah-King; the Pharisees, not because they were opposed to such a political revolution in the abstract, but because this was not their man; the Sadducees, because they were hostile to every such programme for their country, being quite content with existing conditions. Radically hostile to one another, they came to an agreement regarding Jesus; they were not agreed on the premises, but reached the same conclusion. *This man* would represent the contempt of the Pharisees; and *the Romans will come*, etc., the fear of the Sadducees. *Our place*, i.e. their own supremacy in religious things, of which the Temple was the embodiment, or the city Jerusalem, including the Temple (Acts vi. 13 f.), or simply *land and people* (though not so probable). 49 ff. *But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them*. The high priest was *ex officio* the president. Josephus mentions that Caiaphas held the office for ten successive years, from 25–36 A.D. Considerable discussion is implied, as from the antagonism of Pharisees and Sadducees might be expected. The single protests of men like Nicodemus and Joseph would be unheeded. *Ye know nothing at all, nor take account that it is expedient for you [us, A.V.] that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not*. He taunts the wavering, irresolute Pharisees; they do not know their own mind. He knows his mind. This vigorous and contemptuous mode of address is from the Sadducean point of view, and is meant to convince the Pharisees present, who might be demurring to the sentiments of their opponents in favour of putting down whatever provoked Roman jealousy, that a propitiatory offering on that altar was absolutely indispensable to their national continuance. He condemns their ignorant prejudice, obstinate adherence to obsolete traditions, incapacity to discern the signs of the times, and to adjust belief and practice thereby, their

51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; 52 and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered 53 abroad. Then, from that day forth, they took counsel together 54 for to put him to death. Jesus therefore walked no more

ridiculous and childish reluctance, on the score of conscience and religion, to admit Roman supremacy, when the Roman sword is hanging by a thread over their necks. His official position would give him facilities for judging what the temper of the Roman authorities towards the Jews was, which all might not be impressed with. 51. The evangelist, however, felt that this remarkable opinion of Caiaphas was not due simply to his own power of discernment, but to the spirit of prophecy which as high priest and God's official representative had been for the moment bestowed on him. *But this he said not of [from] himself—nation.* The death of Jesus, he believed, would have the effect of expiating the nation's offences in the eyes of Rome, and if brought about by themselves on the more or less ostensible ground that Jesus was claiming sovereignty, would be accepted by Rome as a substitute; a voluntary submission and surrender, an expression of entire subjection to its rule. The Pharisees would get a man they hated out of the road. 52. *And not for the [that, A.V.] nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God scattered abroad.* Is the evangelist quoting still from Caiaphas's speech, or adding his own Christian comment? The latter probably. It was not unnatural to add this world-wide reference of the atoning death of Christ, and the peculiar form given to it, perhaps suggested by the dispersion of many Jews through the world, and the O. T. promises of a time of restoration and of unity in their own land (not, of course, to be limited to the Jews), reminds us of x. 16, "Other sheep I have," etc.; especially as both there and here the laying down of Christ's life is made the condition on which this gathering of men from all parts of the world into the unity of His fellowship should depend. *The children of God scattered abroad,* takes us across the lines of the temporary adoption of Israel, and is explained by i. 12 f., x. 16; cp. also 1 John ii. 2. The high priest saw in the death of Christ the means of securing and consolidating the nation as it then was; the evangelist saw in Christ's death the laying the foundation for the "holy nation," the "chosen generation," the "royal priesthood," "the people for God's own possession," composed of all called out of darkness into God's marvellous light; once no people—now a people, 1 Pet. ii. 9 f. There are many children of truth, honestly striving after righteousness, who must be sought out. 53. *From that day—death.* A formal decree of the Sanhedrin, which was (ver. 57) made public, though the resolution to put Jesus out of the way had been informally agreed to long before, and the sentiments of the Sanhedrin were apparently well known, v. 16, 18, vii. 1, 20, 25, viii. 37, 40, 59, x. 31, xi. 8. This last and greatest miracle of Jesus had sealed His fate.

54-57. In consequence of this pronouncedly and dangerously hostile attitude of the Sanhedrin, Jesus withdrew again from Jerusalem and its vicinity to the solitude of the desert. The Passover feast again coming round, He was sought for by the gathering crowd of worshippers, who eagerly questioned each other as to the likelihood of His appearance; while the rulers issued

openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.

- 55 And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand : and many went  
out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to  
56 purify themselves. Then sought they for Jesus, and spake  
among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think  
57 ye, that he will not come to the feast? Now both the chief  
priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that,  
if any man knew where he were, he should show *it*, that they  
might take him.

CHAP. XII. I. Then Jesus, six days before the passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he

warrants for His apprehension, and charged any one who knew of His whereabouts to give the information. 54. *Jesus—Jews*, vii. 1. “*A city called Ephraim*,” probably in the wild country north-east of Jerusalem, not far off Bethel, towards and overlooking the valley of Jordan. *There He abode with His disciples* : how long we have no means of knowing. His retirement to the Peræa, x. 40, took place in the middle of December, when the feast of Dedication was held, x. 22. Thence He was recalled by the trouble of His friends at Bethany, but at what time we cannot say. His stay at Bethany could not have been beyond a few days at the most, if so long, and the remainder of the time, till the approach of the Passover in April, He spent in privacy at Ephraim. The weeks spent here must have been weeks of intense prayer and communion with God, preparation for the coming conflict, alternating with private instruction to His disciples. 55. *To purify themselves*. Cp. Num. ix. 10; 2 Chron. xxx. 17 f.; and Deut. xvi. 1-4. 56. *They sought—feast?* The suggestion of a negative arose from the commands issued by the authority of the Sanhedrin, ver. 57, requesting information that might lead to His arrest.

10. *Jesus anointed at Bethany—Enters Jerusalem—Greeks desire to see Him—He foretells His universal sovereignty through death—General summary*, ch. xii.

CH. XII. The chapter is divided into the following sections :—1. The anointing of Jesus at Bethany, vers. 1-11. 2. The public entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, vers. 12-19. 3. Greeks at the feast desire to see Jesus; His subsequent discourse, with the supernatural interlude, and final farewell to the Jews, vers. 20-36. 4. Summary by the evangelist of results, vers. 37-43. Lastly, 5. An additional appeal by Jesus recapitulating His claims, vers. 44-end. Jesus left Ephraim for Jerusalem, Mark x. 32, taking the road through Peræa by Jericho, where He called Zacchæus, and healed Bartimæus. Then He passed on with the Galilean pilgrims, but remained at Bethany.

I. 1-11. *The anointing of Jesus at Bethany*. This anointing of Jesus by Mary is recorded also by Matthew and Mark, ch. xxvi. 6 ff., ch. xiv. 3 ff. Luke omits it, while giving account of the previous entertainment in the house of the sisters, x. 38 ff. 1. (Omit the clause *which had been dead*.) *Six days before the Passover*. The Passover was eaten on the day extending

- 2 raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the  
 3 table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with  
 4 the odour of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,

from the evening of the 14th Nisan to the evening of the 15th. The day of arrival at Bethany would be therefore the 9th or 8th, corresponding to our Saturday or Friday. 2. *Therefore they made Him a supper there.* According to Matthew and Mark, in the house of Simon the leper. The inference from this evangelist alone might on the first blush seem to be the house of his friends; an inference, however, which melts away when we reflect how unusual the addition in that case would be, *And Martha served, but Lazarus was one of them that sat at meat with Him.* It is tempting to a certain class of critics to rush at the conclusion that Matthew and Mark are confusing the two anointings, see Luke vii. 36 ff., and Simon the Pharisee with Simon the leper; and that John gives the correct account. The explanation of the circumstance may well be that the villagers of Bethany resolved to express their gratitude to Jesus, and their veneration for Him, in consequence of the raising of Lazarus, by entertaining Him at a banquet; that Lazarus, as the remarkable trophy of the power and love of Jesus, was a distinguished guest, and that his sister Martha was, notwithstanding her evidently good social position, proud to wait on the occasion. 3. *Then Mary, having taken a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair.* A Roman pound = 12 ounces. "*Ointment of spikenard*," lit. "*ointment of pistic nard*." The meaning of *pistic* is disputed. It may be *pure* or *liquid*, or it may be the name of a place or district; see Mark xiv. 3, R.V. margin. The *nard* is an Indian plant; its oil was enclosed in flasks, hermetically sealed, and the neck had to be broken when put to use, Mark xiv. 3. Matthew and Mark mention the *head* of Jesus as having been anointed, and say nothing of the *feet*, or of Mary's wiping them with her hair. (They speak of her simply as "*a woman*.") It was a custom among the Jews and Orientals generally, Ps. xxiii. 5, to anoint the head and feet of guests as a mark of special honour. To wash the feet was ordinary courtesy. To wipe them with the hair was extraordinary, Luke vii. 38, 44, as Oriental etiquette forbade a woman to appear with unloosed hair. Mary may have anointed both head and feet of Jesus; but if so, John's omission of the former is striking. Perhaps he noted the act which testified most to the unutterable love that filled Mary's heart. Lazarus had his place, and Martha hers, at this feast. Mary contrived a place for herself, lavishing on her Lord this costly gift; not content with the marks of general respect shown; constrained, personally, to express her own love and gratitude and honour; devising this exquisite womanly way, not without a secret premonition at heart, that it might be the last opportunity she should have of doing Him any service. John alone mentions that the odour filled the house; as is well said, a touch of "experience not of imagination;" and not without a certain shade of symbolic application. 4 f. *But Judas Iscariot—poor?* (omit *Simon's son*). According to Matthew, it was the "*disciples*"; according to Mark, "*some*"; who cavilled

- 5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and  
 6 given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the  
 poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare  
 7 what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone:  
 8 against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the  
 poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

at this deed. John attributes the ungenerous sentiment and its expression to Judas Iscariot. Probably some of the rest agree with him, more or less; some subtle envious feeling at the bottom, or sincere objection to needless waste moving them; the apparently virtuous and self-denying remonstrance of Judas taking effect. *Three hundred denarii* = £10; see vi. 7. 6. The evangelist's comment on his brother disciple. *But he said this, not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and having the bag bore [took away, R.V.] what was put therein.* "The bag" (Glossokomon), xiii. 29; and 2 Chron. xxiv. 8, 10, 11, a box or chest. Judas had been selected to bear the common purse, into which the charities and gifts of friends were put for their necessities. "Jesus was a poor man" (Bengel). The word "bore" is otherwise rendered "bore away," i.e. purloined. It is susceptible of either meaning. It is the same word as that used of the Jews when they bore stones to stone Jesus, x. 31 (see references there). It is not probable that John knew at this time of the infidelity of Judas to his trust. The questions whether Jesus knew, and if He knew, why He permitted him still to carry the purse, must be answered by falling back on the original question, Why did Jesus choose Judas as a disciple at all? See on vi. 70. 7. *Therefore Jesus said, Let her alone; it was in order that she might keep it for the day of my burial.* (R.V. Suffer her to keep it against the day of my burying.) This reading, put into the margin of R.V., seems the likelier of the two. The reading of A.V. is generally considered inaccurate, "Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this," although it presents most clearly so fine a conception: Mary's half-unconscious thought expressed for her by Him who could do it justice, who can give us credit for our half-formed desires, and can give coherence to our incoherent purposes, can bring to the birth what we are blindly and darkly struggling to say or do. Whichever reading be adopted, we can hardly help feeling that this is the correct interpretation. At the same time, if we are to be guided by the synoptic accounts, as well as by our own instincts, we should render, "Let her alone! it was," etc. We must believe that a holy rush of indignation filled the breast of Jesus as He thought both of the hypocrisy of the man who spoke, and his utter rottenness, and also of the unfeeling, rude manner in which this touching, delicate act had been received. And fitly He proceeds to show the remarkable significance and importance of the deed for Himself. A chivalrous nature itself would defend a woman in such circumstances. To give it the meaning, Let her keep what remains of it for the day of my burial, is intolerable. Jesus can see in the service of love something finer and deeper than the offerer herself is aware of. The impulse of pure affection can say and do the right thing at the right time. Jesus therefore saw in this spontaneous tribute of love a necessary action, which had to be performed on His person, that all things concerning Him might be duly accomplished. 8. *For the poor ye have always with yourselves; but me ye have not always;* so in Matthew and Mark. Jesus

- 9 Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there ? and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.
- 10 But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus
- 11 also to death ; because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.
- 12 On the next day much people that were come to the feast,
- 13 when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna : Blessed *is* the King of Israel that cometh in
- 14 the name of the Lord. And Jesus, when he had found a

makes *Himself* prominent in His reply, and defence of Mary's action. He takes rank above all things and persons beside, as again in Matt. xxv. He identifies the poor with Himself. What is done to Him out of sincere love to Him is precious in His eyes. And thus the unconsidering, even emotional outflow of soul to Him may be in His judgment an act of the very highest order, a service with which He could not dispense. Love to Him is the one thing needful. 9-11. The effect of the raising of Lazarus was still at work, exciting faith on the one hand and deadly hostility on the other. *The common people, therefore, of the Jews (much people, etc., A.V.).* Their instincts are, on the whole, sound ; they are not affected by the prejudices of position, official or otherwise, and while culture broadens in many directions, it tends to check the flow of the strongest emotions. There is, of course, the other side—they crowd to see a wonder, *not on account of Jesus only, but, etc.* 10 f. *But the chief priests consulted, etc.* The impression made by the sight of Lazarus must have been deep and widespread before the dominant faction would have had recourse to this desperate plot. It is interesting to see the forecast of the remarkable blossom at the day of Pentecost in this quiet undergrowth of belief. Note how one sin leads inevitably to another. It is likely, as Lampe suggests, that as the priests and not the Pharisees are mentioned, the Sadducean party alone entertained this diabolical design, being specially interested to put down the miraculous, and all that favoured belief in it ; contrast xi. 57. It would not then be a resolution of the Sanhedrin formally.

2. 12-19. Public entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. 12. *The following day*, see on ver. 1, corresponding to our Sabbath or Monday. *Much people, A.V. Great number, R.V.* ("the common people," Westcott and Hort, as in ver. 9). Cp. carefully for full details, Matt. xxi. 1 ff. ; Mark xi. 1 ff. ; Luke xix. 29 ff. An apparent discrepancy lies on the surface between these three accounts and John's. In the Synoptics no break occurs in Christ's progress from Jericho to Jerusalem. *Who had come to the feast ;* from Galilee and Peræa mostly. 13. *The branches of the palm trees.* The article expresses the fact of definite palm trees growing along the way, or conveys the fact of the usual custom on such festal occasions, Lev. xxiii. 40 ; 1 Macc. xiii. 51 ("Simon returned to Jerusalem with thanksgiving and branches of palm trees, and with harps and cymbals," etc.). The neighbourhood of Jerusalem was rich in palms. *Hosanna : Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.* Taken from Ps. cxviii. 25 f., one of the psalms sung both at the feast of Tabernacles, while a daily procession walked

- 15 young ass, sat thereon ; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion : behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.  
 16 These things understood not his disciples at the first : but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and *that* they had done these  
 17 things unto him. The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from  
 18 the dead, bare record. For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.  
 19 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing ? behold, the world is gone after him.

round the altar, and at the conclusion of the Passover feast, a part of the *Great Hallel* (Ps. cxiii.-cxviii.). The application to the Messiah is clear, and the identification of the Messiah with Jesus more or less conscious on the part of those who used the words. Expectations were kindled at least, and many of Christ's disciples must have hoped and believed that He would now make good His claims to the kingdom. *Hosanna* = save now, I beseech thee ! as translated in the O.T. *loc. cit.*, like our—God save the king ! 14. *Having found a young ass* ; the particulars are given in the Synoptics, and familiar to John's readers no doubt. 15. *Fear not*, etc. A quotation freely taken from Zech. ix. 9, and following exactly neither Hebrew nor LXX. The words in the Old Testament run, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion . . . thy King cometh . . . riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass." Verbal accuracy, as if the words were sacred, so long as the sense was maintained, did not weigh with the N. T. writers. The prophet in this passage encourages Judah, surrounded by enemies, with the assurance that a Saviour King was at hand. The peaceful character of the King is made prominent. The Jews naturally interpreted the promise as Messianic. Of course the prophecy had not lacked fulfilment even though it had not been achieved in this literal manner. We have to look at the spirit of the passage, not at the letter. But there are occasions, as here and xix. 28, where the letter and spirit coincide ; some minds may be impressed with the one, some with the other. 16. *These things His disciples did not understand at first : but when Jesus was glorified—Him.* There was therefore no attempt in the proceeding on the part of the disciples to fulfil a Messianic prophecy. The whole seemed to them at the time natural and spontaneous, the thought of the moment. Our Lord knew the end from the beginning, xiii. 3, xix. 28. *Glorified* : a comprehensive term, including the sufferings as well as the glory that should follow, ver. 23, xvii. 1, 5 ; see on vii. 39. *They remembered* : fulfilment of Christ's promise to them, xiv. 26. 17. *The multitude therefore which were with Him—bare witness.* They bore testimony to the fact of the miracle, and perhaps to Messianic fulfilment in the person of Jesus. 18. *For this cause—sign.* The testimony and the enthusiasm of the eye-witnesses excited many others. The crowds were composed of those who had seen either the miracle or Lazarus afterwards (ver. 9), and took the leading part in the demonstration, and of those whose eager curiosity had been roused. The former accompanied Jesus from Bethany. The latter went out to meet Him when they heard of His arrival. 19. *The Pharisees—Him.* Read, *Ye see*

20 And there were certain Greeks among them that came up  
 21 to worship at the feast: the same came therefore to Philip,  
 which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying,  
 22 Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew:  
 and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.

*that ye are of no use*; cp. xi. 47. Contrast this halting, consciously weak position with that of the Sadducees, ver. 10. The contrast between the sentiment of the rulers and that of the common people is marked. He was "the idol of the people, and the aversion of the privileged." This triumphal entry into the holy city, so different from Christ's previous conduct, ver. 15, finds its explanation—(1) In the need there was for Jesus claiming publicly the Messianic dignity, which he did by *once* accepting the homage and loyalty of the people. They were rightly His. (2) In the resolve of the Sanhedrin to put Him to death. While they ask information about Him, as about a criminal keeping out of the way, He appears in the most public fashion, amid the most enthusiastic demonstrations of the people. And (3) in the nearness of His death. In no other way could the blind and hardened rejection of Him by the leaders appear so culpable as contrasted with His adoration by the masses. The absence of any symbols of royalty,—the ass, not the war-horse,—*e.g.*, indicated further the nature of the Kingship which He claimed.

3. 20-36. Desire of some Greeks at the feast to see Jesus, and last public utterances of Christ in connection with this fact. 20. *Now there were certain Greeks.* The nationality is no doubt meant, though the term is frequently used to denote the Gentile nations as opposed to Jews, vii. 35 (R.V.); Rom. i. 16, ii. 9, etc. *Among them that came [went] up*; see on ii. 13. *To worship at the feast.* They were therefore proselytes, not of righteousness, but of the gate, as were the centurions in Luke vii., Acts x., and the eunuch, Acts viii. 27. The former were Gentiles, who, professing faith in the God of the Jews, after elaborate examination and ceremonial, circumcision, baptism, and the like, were admitted to the full standing of the covenant people. The latter, so called from the O.T. expression, "the stranger that is within thy gates," had not received circumcision, it was enough for them to observe the "seven precepts of Noah," virtually the second, third, sixth, seventh and eighth commandments, abstinence from flesh, "with the blood thereof," and "obedience." The distinction was something like that in Presbyterian congregations known as members and adherents. 21. *These therefore came to Philip, who was of Bethsaida of Galilee*; see i. 43 f. Philip is a Greek name; Galilee was full of Greeks; and the disciple may have been known to them or their friends, or it was simply accident. *Sir, we would [wish to] see Jesus.* The East came in the persons of the Magi to see the cradle of the Son of God, the West in the persons of these Greeks to see the Cross. *To see, i.e.* to have a personal interview. The scene was probably in some of the Temple courts. 22. Philip comes and tells Andrew (another Greek name), and they tell Jesus. Philip was cautious, hesitating, undecided, see notes on i. 43 f., vi. 5 ff. Andrew was ready, see on i. 41 and vi. 8. Philip might not feel sure how the Master would take it, especially in view of some of His pronounced utterances, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;" "Go not into the way of the Gentiles;" and he might also be afraid of compromising Jesus in the judgment of the strict

23 And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that  
 24 the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto  
 you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it  
 abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

and hostile Jews; cp. xiv. 9. Andrew solves his difficulty in the way in which all difficulties of disciples are resolved, referring to Jesus Himself.

23-36. The answer of Jesus to Philip and Andrew, being of the nature of a solemn public declaration and testimony, implies the introduction and presence of the Greeks, and a large general audience besides. There are three separate stages in it. *First*, Jesus recognises in this request of the Greeks the need and unconscious craving of the world at large for a Saviour, and the arrival of that supreme hour in His own and the world's history when He must die; and by a parable from nature He enforces the necessity of death for a truer, fuller life. This principle He applies to all who would serve Him, promising them, however, fellowship with Himself in His coming glory, vers. 23-26. *Second*, Brought face to face with this overwhelming necessity of death, Jesus appears for a moment to stagger under the prospect. He appeals to His Father first for deliverance, then to glorify His name. He is answered by a voice from heaven, which, variously interpreted by the confused bystanders, Jesus explains as coming for their sake; and receives it as the assurance that His death on the cross shall be the destruction of the devil's power, and His own elevation to universal supremacy over men, vers. 27-33. *Third*, Jesus is asked by some of His hearers how He can reconcile His death with the Messiah's promised immortality, to which He replies with emphatic solemnity, that while they have light they should use it; and then withdraws finally, vers. 34-36.

(1.) 23-26. First Phase. 23. *The hour has come that the Son of man should be glorified*, xiii. 1, 31, xvii. 1; see on ii. 4, xi. 4. Jesus hears the world knocking at His door. The door could be opened only through the rending of His flesh: since as a Jew He had to die, that the enmity between Jew and Gentile might be slain, Eph. ii. 14 f.; Col. i. 20. A momentous hour for Him; events are crowding on; the cross is rising up in front of Him. It is time for salvation to be accomplished when the world is asking after it. The name "The Son of Man" is suitable here, as denoting the Saviour of all men, both Jews and Greeks, who should be glorified in their universal homage, x. 16, xi. 52 f. In xi. 4, He calls Himself the "Son of God," who should be glorified through the miracle, and then as consequence through the sufferings and death appointed for Him. On the term "glorified," see on vii. 39. 24. *Verily, verily, I say unto you*. The emphatic, solemn asseveration points to the apparent contradictoriness of what is to be said, that death is the gateway to fuller life. *Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it beareth much fruit*; cp. 1 Cor. xv. 36. No life in the true sense without death. The principle has its application in the physical and moral spheres. It is an eternal truth. In nature one seed dies and thirty, sixty, a hundred live in its place, owing their existence to its death, as the stripping and rotting away of the husk sets free the living principle, which shoots up and grows and sprouts. In the domain of the will, the sacrifice of all self-seeking desires is indispensable to the production of the fruits of a noble character. Selfishness is loneliness here and hereafter; it has no fruit of love, joy, peace. Jesus Himself, so far from being an exception to

25 He that loveth his life shall lose it ; and he that hateth  
 26 his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any  
 man serve me, let him follow me ; and where I am, there  
 shall also my servant be : if any man serve me, him will *my*

this universal law, as Son of Man, comes under its application ; and is in fact the highest, most wonderful example of its truth ; so high and wonderful as amounts to a unique embodiment of it ; a positive interpretation and clear reading of what nature struggles to express. He—though Son of Man—the one true Son of humanity ; though the grain of wheat in value infinitely outweighing every other and all other actual and possible grains together, must die, in order that the life eternal in Him may become the life of men. He must offer up His own will in free, loving devotion to God. At the same time, we cannot but observe that this principle of “death in order to life” had nothing on which to exert its strength in the case of Him who was “holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners ;” He could never die to sinful self, who had no sinful self to die to ; and the need-be for His death must be explained by the relation to sin and sinners which was voluntarily undertaken by Him. Also in His cross all that was limited, local, partial, *Jewish*, passed away in order to make way for the universal, spiritual kingdom of the Son of Man. 25. *He that loveth his life shall lose it [loseth it] ; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal ;* cp. Luke xiv. 26 ; Matt. x. 39, xvi. 25 ; Mark viii. 35 ; Luke ix. 24, xvii. 33. Probably one of those deeply-suggestive paradoxical utterances which the Lord would often use : the reading of the natural law just enunciated into the moral sphere. Self-love leads to destruction and death ; self-hatred leads to everlasting safety. From beginning to end of His earthly history, Jesus laid His life down for men. He was rich, and for our sakes became poor ; see Phil. ii. 5 ff. So, whoever shall gain the higher heavenly life must set aside the earthly life. The present and temporal must be sacrificed for the future and eternal. Life is through death : glory through suffering. The one source of moral fruitfulness is the surrender of the will. A truth peculiarly in place for Greeks, whose essential conception of life in its fulness, vigour, beauty, was assertion of self. To renounce self was for them the mark of a little, mean-souled man. Death was a painful thought, and was hidden away. Excessive grief could not be indulged or represented in act, implying consciousness of inability to comfort it. 26. *If any man serve me, let him follow me*, etc. Submitting Himself to this law, Jesus calls those who would serve Him to imitate Him. Matt. xvi. 24 ; Mark viii. 34 ; Luke ix. 23. And He promises that they shall have for reward His own presence and fellowship, and the Father’s honour. *Where I am*, vii. 34, viii. 23, note, see also xiv. 3, xvii. 24. The future condition of glory, depending on and consisting, in part, in complete likeness to the Lord ; as it shall be the enjoyment of His immediate presence for ever. *Him shall the Father honour*. The honour of Sonship in His everlasting house, xiv. 2. Christ’s disciples had their minds full of thoughts about thrones and kingdoms here. Christ bids them throw these aside and look above, Luke xviii. 29 f. ; Matt. xix. 28 ff. ; Mark x. 29 f. The words translated *serve*, *servant*, are *diakonein*, *diakonos* ; from which *deacon*. It is used of the attendants at the marriage feast of Cana, ii. 5, 9 ; also by our Lord in Matt. xx. 26, . . . let him be your *minister* ; Mark ix. 35, x. 43 ; in two of which passages (and in Matt. xxii., parable of the Marriage Supper)

27 Father honour. Now is my soul troubled ; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour : but for this cause  
28 came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then

it is brought into connection and contrast with the word for *bond-servant* = *doulos* : the most frequent term for servants of Christ ; so in xiii. 16, xv. 15. (In xviii. 36 Jesus uses a third term, nowhere else employed : *hyperetes* = a rower, an official attendant ; apt in this place. See Trench's Synonyms, who gives as the peculiarity of the *diakonos*, his "activity for the work:" a shade of significance suiting the conception of this passage.)

(2.) 27-33. Second Phase. An important contribution to the solution of the mystery of Gethsemane, which, however, John does not record. 27. *Now is my soul troubled ; and what shall I say?* Ps. vi. 3, xlii. 6. The contemplation of His appointed sufferings for the moment troubles the serenity of His soul. "My soul," so Matt. xxvi. 38 ; and Mark xiv. 34, ch. x. 15, 17 (my life). The seat of natural emotions. *Is troubled*, so in xi. 33, xiii. 21. Jesus was true Son of Man, and could be no stranger to all the simple, pure emotions of our nature ; possessed these, in fact, in their most delicate and tender form. Death, and such a death, with its mystery of woe known to Himself and His Father alone, was dreadful. Had it been less so, the need for it had been less. Heb. ii. 14 f. ; cp. the agony in the garden. *What shall I say?* A conflict of emotion, as if He knew not what to pray for. Natural human shrinking, struggling with the recognition of the Divine necessity. In this respect it behoved Him to be made like ourselves, Rom. viii. 26 ; Heb. v. 7. And, like His brethren in their time of need, He turns to the Father for help. Observe the threefold gradation in His prayer, vers. 27, 28, as Jesus passes from trouble to repose, and to repose where it is only to be found. First, the spontaneous, involuntary cry for deliverance, *Father, save me from this hour!* as in Gethsemane, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me!" That Jesus for even one moment could urge a petition which could not and might not be granted by God, as it shows the reality of His human emotions, shows also the intensity of the struggle within by which the victory over sin and death was achieved. But such a prayer can be regarded in its true light when it is understood as a recoil of the whole being of the Divine Son from the necessity of undergoing that experience which wrung from Him the cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" It was a prayer to be delivered from the sense of God-forsakenness. Second, the relief of utterance brings the calming recollection of the need-be for the ordeal of suffering. 28. *But for this cause came I unto this hour.* The "cause" was the appointed path of suffering, through which the glorifying should be attained. Jesus is clearly conscious again of the greatness of His mission and destiny, ver. 23 and ver. 32. Third, the return to rest in the desire that God in all may be glorified. *Father, glorify Thy name!* cp. "O my Father, if this cup cannot pass away except I drink it, Thy will be done." The conflict becomes victory : the victory of resignation to the will of God, at any personal cost ; of whole-hearted sympathy with the Father's aims. It is the highest utterance of faith and love and hope, that whatever experience of pain is ordained, the outcome may be all to the glory of the name of God. Suffering then becomes an easy yoke and a light burden. "Hallowed be Thy name" is the first of all our petitions, and the crown of all Christ desires. This prayer of our Lord reflects the experience of His servants in their hour of woe. We ask first to

came there a voice from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified  
 29 *it*, and will glorify *it* again. The people therefore that stood  
 by, and heard *it*, said that it thundered: others said, An  
 30 angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice  
 31 came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the  
 judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be  
 32 cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw  
 33 all *men* unto me. This he said, signifying what death he

be spared some bitter and sore thing. Then by the appeal to God we learn from Him to acquiesce in the need-be for such discipline. And, last of all, we put ourselves out of view entirely, while we pray that God may get all the glory, more glory if it must be so, through our pain. On the simple appeal, "Father," see xvii. 1. 28. *A voice from heaven*. The voice which twice before had spoken and attested the Divine mission of Jesus: at the Baptism and on the Mount of Transfiguration. Now an appropriate time and the last time. One would like to know what the effect was on the Greeks present. God answers when we are prepared to receive an answer; that is, when we say, "Hallowed be Thy name!" *I have both glorified [it], and will glorify [it] again*. Christ prayed that the Father might glorify His name in all that would happen to Himself; and the response assures Him that, as the Father has already been glorified through His active life and work, He shall be glorified through His suffering and death. 29 f. *The multitude*, etc. The sound was heard by all; by some as a peal of thunder, by others as an articulate voice. As with Paul (Acts ix. and xxii.), the distinct words were probably heard by Jesus alone. But this is not certain. A spiritual capacity is required to hear and understand such a voice. Men may have different ideas about such an event, but no one can misinterpret the fact of Christ's cross. *Not on my account has this voice happened, but on your account*, see xi. 42. He did not require the assurance, at least in such outer form, any more than He required to pray for power to raise Lazarus. The voice was a supernatural fact, a sign to the bystanders, if they would receive it, of exceptional relations between Jesus and God. Those whom the miracles did not convince would remain unconvinced still. It was in its way the last appeal of the kind. 31-33. The glorifying of the Father's name through Jesus has a threefold consequence bound up with it, which, as now attested by the voice from heaven, He proceeds to explain. The crisis of the history of the world has come. (1) *Now is the judgment of this world*; cp. xvi. 11. Eternal Truth and Goodness appeared in the world, and the world hated and slew Him. That is the revelation of its moral state: therefore its judgment. (2) *Now shall the prince of this world be cast out*. The world's judgment is the judgment of its prince. The light of Christ exposes the lie of the devil, who reigns by deception; and henceforward the world dethrones its prince. On the name "Prince of this world," cp. viii. 44, xiv. 30, xvi. 11; 2 Cor. iv. 4; Eph. ii. 2, vi. 12. The conception "cast out" may refer simply to the loss of the supremacy over men; but cp. vi. 37, xv. 6, and Rev. xx. 2 and 10. (3) *And I, if I be lifted up from [out of, R.V.] the earth, will draw all men to myself*. The world must have a Prince, and the crucified Christ takes the vacant place. His rule is based on suffering and dying for the world—"if I be lifted up:" it is universal in its extent—"all men;" it is spiritual,

34 should die. The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever : and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?  
 35 Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with

catholic, independent of all local earthly ties—"out of the earth;" it is in its nature a personal bond between the king and each subject—"to myself;" and it is exerted by the gentleness of moral and spiritual constraint—I *will draw*, vi. 44. This is the application of the parable of ver. 24. Of course, what is spoken of here as actually accomplished, or about to be, is only the expression of the certainty with which the expulsion of Satan from God's world, and the enthronement of the Son of God—a long and laborious process—shall be done. The death of Christ was the deathblow to Satan's kingdom, and the foundation of Christ's own. On "lifted up," see iii. 14, viii. 28. The words "from (out of) the earth" occur only here. As explained before, the expression "lifted up" conveys the double reference to the cross and to the glory of the right hand, similarly to the expression "glorified" in ver. 23. But the addition of these words, "from the earth," would seem to limit the reference, in this passage at least, to the death on the cross, as immediately explained by John in the following verse. It is as actually seated at the right hand of power that Jesus by the Holy Spirit and through His word draws all to Himself; but as the sufferings, shame, and death of the cross were the necessary condition to this exaltation as Son of Man, and as the mystery and marvel of redemption consist in the fact that He who was crucified in weakness becomes the power of God unto salvation, the thought of the death rules the passage. Christ's death was the world's judgment; the triumph over the devil, and the whole pomp and majesty of wrong; and it is as crucified that He is the drawing power over hard and sinful hearts; His death was the foundation of His kingdom. 33. Comment added by John: *But this He said, signifying by what manner of death He should die.* The evangelist saw in Christ's words more than a reference to the fact of death: he saw a reference to the *mode* as well. The *cross* was inseparable from the thought of Christ's *death*. The cross became the symbol of Christianity. Paul gloried in the cross. The reason is obvious; the disgrace, the cruelty, the agony, the curse, combined to emphasize the fact of the death, to give it a peculiar and unique character; so Phil. ii. 8, "Becoming obedient unto death, *even the death of the cross.*"

(3.) 34-36. Third Phase. *The multitude therefore answered Him, We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth for ever.* Such a passage, e.g., as Dan. vii. 13 f. implied the eternity of the kingdom and also of the King; and the general drift of psalms like the 45th, 110th, and 72nd, lies in the same direction (especially contrast "out of Zion," Ps. cx., with the words, "out of the earth"). *The law*, put for the whole Old Testament, as in x. 34. *How dost thou say* (who art thou, who puttest thy authority against Scripture?) *that it is necessary for the Son of Man to be lifted up?* as in iii. 14. They may not have understood the reference to the manner of death; they did, however, understand that Jesus spoke of being taken out of the world somehow. And, knowing that He claimed to be the Messiah, they were puzzled. He called Himself "Son of Man" in ver. 23. *Who is this Son of Man?* or "*this one*, for He cannot be the Son of Man of Dan. vii.;" see on i. 51. 35. *Jesus therefore answered them, Yet a little while the light is among you.* 1. You have the

you : walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you : for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he  
 36 goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

37 But though he had done so many miracles before them,

light only a little longer with you. 2. Use it to walk while you may, lest darkness overtake you, for the walker in darkness does not know whither he goes. 3. Believe on the light, in order to become sons of light. The time was past for answering such questions when Jesus was speaking of the need be and the fruit of His death. Events would soon teach and answer all questions ; cp. viii. 12, ix. 5. *Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness overtake you*, Jer. xiii. 16. If a living Jesus were an offence, how much more a crucified Jesus? Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension, with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, made the light shine over all the world ; but those who wilfully rejected Him when on earth were in danger of being irreparably hardened against Him by His death. Besides, Jesus would say, Put the light you have to the true use. Instead of analysing it, walk while it shines, vii. 17. The fate of the rejecter of light is to have darkness overtake him, xi. 9, 10, viii. 12, iii. 19-21. (The word *overtake* is the same as that used in i. 6, rendered *comprehended*.) *While ye have the light, believe on the light, in order that ye may become sons of light*. By using the light they would grow into its holy, pure, and true character themselves. Their belief in it, moral trust and dependence on it, would make them share its nature. "Ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord. Walk as children of light," Eph. v. 8, 9 ; see 1 Thess. v. 4, 5 ; Luke xvi. 8. Jesus in effect says first, You have light, do not quench it ; use it, follow its leading, no matter where it takes you ; and then, You have light—I am the Light ; believe on me, and you shall have my nature for your own ; in union with me you shall have the principle and source of light, *i.e.* of all goodness, righteousness, truth, love within you, cp. iv. 14. Faith is union with Christ, and to have Him as light is to have Him as the very source of our life (i. 4, "the life was the light of men"). Closer relation could not be. Then, by believing they should *know* ; they should have the principle of knowledge within them ; should not need to ask questions, in such sort at least as to stake their existence on the satisfactory answer. The words are tragic when we remember the impending fate of the Jewish people, and their subsequent history. The tragedy is continually re-enacted in individual souls. *Sons of light* : a well-known Hebrew phrase,—"sons of thunder," "sons of consolation," "sons of peace."

4. 36 f.-43. The Summary of results of the whole ministry of Jesus by the evangelist. There was unbelief and there was belief. The unbelief in the face of so many signs of His Messianic dignity, could be accounted for only as the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isa. liii. 1, vi. 10. The belief, though shared by many of the chief priests, was timid, and remained unconfessed through fear of man.

36 f. *Was hid*, or *hid Himself*, as in viii. 59 ; perhaps in Bethany, where the few hours left were spent in quiet preparation for the cross. 37. *So many signs* ; see vii. 31, xi. 47. The *nature* as well as the *number* may be implied ; see ix. 16, xv. 24. No doubt the evangelist had in view such signs as the raising of Lazarus and the healing of the man born blind. Though John

38 yet they believed not on him : that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord  
 39 been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because  
 40 that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with *their* eyes, nor understand with *their* heart, and be converted, and

records few miracles, he regards the whole ministry of word and act as a continuous series of *signs*, through which the eye of faith may detect the glory as of the Only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. *Before them:* under their very eyes, so that the conditions demanded for proof of a miracle by modern scientists were fulfilled. 38. Strange though this unbelief was, it was but the fulfilling of the Old Testament prophecy, Isa. liii. 1. It would be a travesty of the writer's thought to make it mean that the final cause of such a prophecy was to produce unbelief. Yet the prediction rendered fulfilment inevitable. The prophet bewails the universal unbelief of the men of his time in the message of Divine grace delivered to them, mediately or immediately, through the Servant of the Lord. And the evangelist sees another application of the words to the generation that rejected Christ. Perhaps also he may have felt that the words had never reached their truest, fullest significance till now, as the passage in which they occur is the most strikingly Messianic of all O.T. predictions. At least all the results of Christ's appearance were foreknown and determined by God. Surprising, and indeed in many respects staggering, as was the rejection of Jesus by the rulers of the people, that rejection was foreseen by the Omniscient God, and was simply in deplorable conformity with the antecedent history of the Jewish people. As it was part of the Divine decree that the Messiah should be "bruised and put to grief," it was also part of that decree that He should be "despised and rejected of men," Isa. liii. 3, 10, and the men who of all ought to have welcomed Him, i. 11. 39. *Therefore they could not believe*, etc. The evangelist strikes a bolder note. Unbelief was foreseen and foretold, not only so, but *ordained*, and belief rendered impossible. The nation as represented by its leaders is referred to, and the unbelief of the Jew was not only overruled, but appointed as the necessary condition for the admission of the Gentiles to the benefits of the salvation of God (Rom. xi.). That this *national* rejection could come about only as a consequence of *individual* rejection is of course, and each individual must bear his own share of responsibility for the act; but the wider outlook softens the apparent asperity of the Divine decree. First, they would not believe, and then they could not; an order verified by much sorrowful experience; and the just judgment of God on wilful disobedience, whether one regards it as a law of man's moral nature, or as the direct act of God Himself. Between these two, the modern and the scriptural mode of viewing the same result, there can hardly be a contradiction. Sin leads to sin, deeper and more hopeless; a natural law and a Divine penalty join hands. 39, 40. *Because that Isaiah said again—them.* Quotation freely taken from Isa. vi. 10, where the prophet is warned that one result of his mission will be to harden men against God, instead of gaining them. This result may be ascribed to the word, as in Isaiah, or to God through the word, as here. The unbelief of men is their own act; they will not be able to shift blame on circumstances or on God. God overrules this

- 41 I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.  
 42 Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*,  
 43 lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.  
 44 Jesus cried, and said, He that believeth on me, believeth

unbelief for His own purposes in grace, and not only so, but, mysterious as it seems, ordains the unbelief in order that it may achieve the other (see Rom. ix.-xi.). The freewill of man, and his personal responsibility for his action under the word, must be held as one half of the truth, of which the other is the sovereignty of God. Peter puts the two together, Acts ii. 23. Perhaps, however, there is no need to bring this conception into the words of the evangelist. Writing long after the events of Christ's ministry, the objection would be in his mind: Why did the Messiah's own nation then not accept Him? A stumbling-block to some. And he could say that the fact of this rejection was foretold in the line of Divine revelation long ago, fell into its own predetermined place in the march of God's eternal decree towards the accomplishment of human redemption. 41. *When [or because] he saw His glory and spake of Him*; referring to the vision in Isa. vi., possibly also to the marvellous delineation of the suffering Servant of the Lord in Isa. liii. As to the former, theophanies were interpreted, like the angel of the Lord, of Christ. The glory of Jehovah is the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father, i. 14.

42 f. There was, however, a measure of belief. *Nevertheless, however, even of the rulers many believed on Him.* Even among the class least open to conviction, because of position and prejudice, Christ and His word told. The most striking testimony, perhaps, to the power of the truth, this silent persuasion of it in unlikely conditions. *But because of the Pharisees they did not confess it [or Him], lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.* It was not a faith that meanwhile exerted any influence on the course of affairs. A minority held it, and, unable to check the action of the majority, and afraid of consequences to themselves, they kept quiet. Their faith was real, but, being unconfessed, was fruitless. Their conduct was ungenerous and ignoble. They might reason that their pronounced adhesion to Christ would do *Him* no good and them much harm; cp. ix. 22. They were really influenced by fear; they had regard to their reputation, and not to their conscience. An outspoken protest in the interests of the truth can never be without effect. No doubt there were men like Nicodemus, whose sympathies and views were quite well known, vii. 52; but partly through sense of helplessness and partly through cowardice, they could take no united course. It was part of the cross of Christ that the men who knew He was right and believed on Him, dared not speak for Him. Confession is imperatively required of faith, Mark xvi. 16; Rom. x. 10. Note how the Pharisees are specially mentioned, being the bitterest enemies of Christ, and the makers or unmakers of men's good name in religion.

5. 44-50. Recapitulation of Christ's claims and teaching, as if from Christ's own lips. 44. *But Jesus cried, and said.* The indefiniteness as to

- 45 not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me,  
 46 seeth him that sent me. I am come a light into the world,  
 that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.  
 47 And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him  
 not : for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.  
 48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one  
 that judgeth him : the word that I have spoken, the same

time and place, especially after ver. 36, points to a general summing up of all that Jesus had taught, and of all to be inferred therefrom, rather than to some special address. *Cried*, vii. 37. The earnest, far-reaching gospel call. The verses contain, *first*, the relations of Jesus to God ; and, *second*, His relations to men. (1) First, vers. 44, 45. Faith in Him is faith in God. *He that believeth on me—me*. The paradoxical way of putting it brings out sharply the identity of belief in God with the belief in Jesus ; see xiv. 1, 7, v. 23. Belief in the Son is belief in the Father. Recognition of the claims of Jesus Christ therefore, in even a partial manner, is the straight road towards the highest worship and reverence. And the converse is also true : worship or reverence which passes over Jesus to fix on God, can give nothing but a vague, unsatisfactory account of itself or of its object. Rejection of Jesus is rejection of God. Second, to see Jesus is to see God. *He that seeth—me*, vi. 40. The verb denotes serious consideration (in xiv. 9, “He that hath seen me,” etc. ; it is the ordinary word which is used). That Jesus is the perfect revelation of God, underlies the necessity of faith in Him as in God. (2) Vers. 46–50. Relations of Jesus to men. He is their Light, for the acceptance of whom they are responsible, and shall be one day judged by the word He has spoken, which is the loving message of a Father, and which is the life-giving word of God. 46. *I have come a light into the world*, etc.,—*darkness*, i. 9, viii. 12, ix. 5, and ver. 35 f. 47. *And if any man hear my words, and keep them not [believe not, A.V.], I judge him not : for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world* ; see iii. 17, viii. 15 f., ix. 39. Not only were the *signs* conclusive as to Jesus’ mission, but His *words* were such as to leave men who heard them without excuse. During His ministry on earth Jesus sustained the single rôle of Saviour of men. He might have exercised judgment on unbelievers ; regard to His own dignity might at times even have seemed to require the vindication of His claims against those who insulted and despised Him. But it was His mission then to endure the contradiction of sinners against Himself, and to submit to the power of wrong. This patient endurance of Jesus was so different from what men might have expected, so different from the ordinary expectations of Messiah’s work, that it may have actually constituted an offence. If Jesus were all He said, why not exercise Divine prerogatives on unbelievers ? Why permit them to prosper ? Did not the Baptist himself announce Him as holding His fan in His hand ? It was well that the evangelist should emphasize Christ’s power to judge, and yet His declination of that work for the present, and of the summary hasty methods of men. The world’s history is the world’s judgment. God can afford to wait. 48. The emphatic *I* of the previous verse suggests a contrast : not *I*, and not *now*, but my word shall ; and by and by. *He that rejects me, and receives not my sayings, hath one who judges him*. Personal rejection of Jesus and the refusal of His sayings

49 shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.  
50 And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: what-

may not necessarily be identical. In so far, no doubt, as His sayings were concerned with His own Divine claims, the distinction is nominal, see vi. 60 ff. But there might be a personal rejection of Christ without rejection of His teaching, in so far as this was a revelation of righteousness, truth, love; a Divine ideal, in short, for men. In fact, through reception of such teaching, and the recognition of its source as Divine, men were and are led to receive Jesus as Himself the Eternal Word, and deserving of worship. Not to receive His sayings, therefore, would betray a greater estrangement from His Spirit than to reject Him personally as Son of God, see viii. 45-47. Ultimately, there is no difference between the religion of Christ and the Christian religion. *The word which I have spoken, that shall judge him in the last day.* The change of term from the mere individual, isolated words or sayings to the connected discourse, "the word," is significant. It is the whole presentation of Christ in His gospel which is meant. "The word of the truth of the gospel," Col. i. 5; "The word of life," 1 John i. 1. The hearing of this word, therefore, is not a mere incident in a man's life, it is the crisis of his history. "Take heed how ye hear." In disowning present judgment of an objective kind, Jesus warns of the subjective judgment in conscience, when at the last the word of truth, which was set aside, shall come back armed with the scourge of evil memories. The unbeliever bears his judgment with him. It is written in himself, and will be inseparable from himself; he cannot escape from it. That he sinned against the light, the true light of men, and chose the darkness of mind and heart, will be the source of endless remorse. An objective judgment is, however, not necessarily denied. Jesus will be judge of all, v. 22. 49. *For I of myself have not spoken; but the Father who sent me has given me a commandment what to say and what to speak.* The reason why the word of Christ shall judge men who reject it is, that it is no word of individual opinion, no word of temporary application or importance, no passing phase of religious or moral sentiment. It is the final word spoken by the Father to men through the Son: the word giving life, the commandment to be obeyed, vi. 29. The gospel of Christ contains, therefore, the absolute duty of man. It is the message from the Father to His children. It is the eternal commandment of the living God to His moral creatures. Cp. v. 19, 30, vii. 17, 18, 28, viii. 28, 42, xiv. 10, 24, xvii. 8, 14. (This is the only passage, however, of all these where the preposition used is different, *ek*, not *apo*: for the distinction, see vii. 28, viii. 42.) 50. *And I know* [perfect conviction, knowledge of experience] *that His commandment is life eternal.* 1 John iii. 23: "This is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment." Cp. also vi. 63, 68, and xvii. 3: "This is life eternal, that they may know Thee," etc. By identifying His Father's commandment to Him, as to what He should speak to men, with eternal life, Jesus points to the personal union and communion between the believer and Himself, which is made good through reception of the word. Obedience to this commandment is therefore obedience to the law of life; such life as God has intended man to have in His own fellowship, and offers to him in

soever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

CHAP. XIII. I. Now, before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of

the Son. *What therefore I utter, as the Father hath said to me, so I utter [it].* Nothing more—or less—or otherwise; and in the manner of a Father's word to His children. To be unresponsive to the love and pleading of a Father's voice, to reject a Father's counsel, is to be self-condemned.

**B.—CHRIST'S MANIFESTATION OF HIS GLORY IN PRIVATE TO HIS OWN, xiii.—xvii.**

*Alone with His own—He washes their feet—Exposes the traitor, and then comforts and instructs the eleven in view of His departure; finally, when they make a complete confession of their faith, He turns to the Father and commends Himself and His disciples and Church to His care, xiii.—xvii.*

CHS. XIII.—XVII. The record of the public ministry of Jesus closes with the last chapter. In the five following chapters we have an account of the last hours Jesus spent with His disciples, in the course of which He crowned all past self-disclosures by revealing His inmost heart towards them, and drew them on to the expression of complete faith, xvi. 30. The key to all He now did and said is contained in the opening words: "Jesus, having loved His own who were in the world, loved them to the end." Of this love a twofold proof is given: first by *deed*, when He condescended to wash their feet; and then by *word*, when, having dismissed the traitor, He comforted them in view of His departure by expounding to them the sublime doctrines of the eternal relations in which He stood to the Father and to them, and they to the Father through Him, and promised them another Comforter, the Spirit of truth.

CH. XIII. This chapter has three divisions—(1) The washing of the disciples' feet, and its import, vers. 1–20; (2) The exposure and dismissal of Judas Iscariot, vers. 21–30; (3) The consequent statement of Jesus, that the purpose of God in His mission to earth had now reached its climax; that He was about to withdraw from their sight; that the test and proof of their continued fidelity to Him should be obedience to His new commandment to love one another, with the warning to Simon Peter of His approaching denial of his Lord, vers. 31–38. The omission of the institution of the Lord's Supper will not surprise us when we remember (1) that John wrote long after this memorial was established and celebrated through the Roman world; and both the account of the Synoptists and the Epistles of Paul were widely circulated; and (2) that the evangelist presents us with the ideas that underlie the institution and are expressed in it; if not the Communion, at least the Communion address.

I. 1–20. **The washing of the disciples' feet.** 1. The knowledge which Jesus had that His death was at hand, was the reason why He desired to give a proof to His disciples that His love to them was enduring, not affected by His departure from this world. *Now, before the feast of the Passover.* The words give the impression of some short interval still intervening before the set time for the observance of the feast. In all probability, therefore, the evening of the day previous, *i.e.* the 13th day of the month Nisan (see on xviii. 28). *Jesus knowing.* The word

this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were  
 2 in the world, he loved them unto the end. And supper being  
 ended, (the devil having now put into the heart of Judas  
 3 Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;) Jesus knowing that the  
 Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was  
 4 come from God, and went to God; he riseth from supper,  
 and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded

for full and complete knowledge; so at ver. 3. *That His hour had come*, see on xii. 23, 27, ii. 4, xvii. 1. *In order that He should depart out of this world unto the Father.* Expression of the Divine purpose, and of the consciousness on the part of Jesus that the time had come to give effect to it, x. 17 f. His death was in His own power and at His own time. Death was for Him, and for all who are His, a *going away to the Father* from this present outward and visible system of things. This world, indeed, is—apart from man's share in it (though this, too, is overruled)—but a system expressly ordained by the Father for the training of His children; but the essential feature of the training is that the Father is not seen. What awaits believers at death is a home, their true eternal home, and the love of the Father. More is told the responsive heart in those words about the glory of the future than the most sublime and elaborate description could give. *Having loved His own who were in the world, to the end He loved them.* Love sums up the whole attitude of Jesus to His own, and it is crowned in the supreme act of self-devotion. "His own" were, in the first application, His loyal disciples, who had continued with Him in His temptations; but are all who should believe in Him through their word; the subjects of His own explicit intercession, xvii. 20; and they are assured hereby of their Lord's abiding, undying love and care. Such was the heart of Jesus. Then follows the heart of Judas; heart of heaven, heart of hell; heart of God, heart of the devil.

2. *And while supper was going on*, so R. V.; A. V. *ended*, which is wrong, see ver. 12. *The devil.* From the sublime heights of such wonderful, Divine, eternal love we are taken to the depths of diabolic malice and hate. *Having already put [thrown, injected] into the heart of Judas [son] of Simon Iscariot, that he should betray Him.* Cp. xii. 4, vi. 71; but in neither of those passages is it said that the *intention* was actually formed. Simply, Judas was the man who should betray Jesus. The rebuke at Bethany threw disloyalty and disappointment over into desire for revenge, Luke xxii. 3. The action is as if now taken out of the hands of the man, and the devil rules him. His will is the slave of evil, and beyond his own control. Jesus knows what is going on in the unhappy man's bosom. The unclean spirit has at last entered in to dwell with seven spirits more wicked than himself. 3. *[Jesus] knowing that the Father—God.* Jesus was conscious of the trust of omnipotence His Father reposed in Him. Conscious also of His Divine origin and destiny, and in full view of this unique glory, He proceeds to do what is narrated of Him, iii. 35, viii. 42, 55. 4. *He riseth from supper*; cp. ver. 2. The feet were washed before supper. Some little time had in this case elapsed, as none of the disciples would submit to do the office for the rest. The episode, Luke xxii. 24, may fitly be taken in at this point. *Layeth aside His garments*, cp. x. 11, 15. *And having taken a towel, He girded Himself.* The remarkable contrast is to be noted between the facts of ver. 3 and those of ver. 4 ff.

- 5 himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began  
 to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel  
 6 wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter :  
 and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet ?  
 7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest  
 8 not now ; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto  
 him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him,  
 9 If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter

5. *Then He poureth water into the bason—girded.* To do what the others refused in pride to do was Christlike. The action reflects the whole condescension and love of His incarnation for our redemption. He did what no other could if he would, what no other would if he could, Phil. ii. 5 ff. Note that He must have washed the feet of the traitor with the others.

6 f. *So [R.V.] He cometh to Simon Peter.* The conjunction *so* or *therefore* signifying a certain expectancy, as of something likely to happen when He came to Simon Peter, as in course He would come. We seem to read the thoughts of the rest : What will Simon do when the Master comes to him ? Simon may have been most vehement of all in declining the little deed of kindness to the rest. *Lord, dost Thou wash my feet ?* the question rather an exclamation of dismay and astonishment. *THOU ! What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt recognise [understand, R.V.] hereafter.* Suggestion that this act of Christ was far-reaching in its lessons and purpose. Not a hasty thing, done partly in indignation, partly in unthinking, hasty impulse to end the strife. But an act done in full consciousness of all He was, and was to be, which had deeper meaning than could be thought, even by those who were the objects of it and witnessed it, and a meaning which would appear only in the future. The saying is applicable to all the dealings of God with His servants in their present imperfect state. The thought of complete understanding hereafter encourages them to endure whatever tries faith and love. Our present ignorance is no cause of faithlessness or fainting, but a cause for trust.

8. *Peter—feet.* Peter's pride, sense of his own sin, sense of what was becoming to his Master, urge him to resist. He would not be thrown on the future for explanation. An unreflecting impulse, partly also an attempt to screen himself ; for how could he quietly allow Jesus to do what he felt was beneath himself to do ? The false sense of dignity keeps men from being Christian. In subjecting pride to humbling, our feelings to wounding, our hopes to disappointment, our desires to mortification, Christ is throwing us on the future, pledging to do for us then all we trust Him for. Simon would learn much by experience even in this life. Christ makes events teach. The cross opened all eyes. With faith and patience, all things become plain. *If I—me.* One of the Lord's calm, profound sayings. Submission is needful even to what is dark and unintelligible ; obedience is the great badge of discipleship. Submission also to Christ's personal cleansing, in order to have Christ's personal fellowship. The sense of the need of cleansing is much, and the recognition of Christ as the one cleanser of the soul is more, Ps. li. 7. How Christ cleanses, in the great signification, Peter learned afterwards too (1 Pet. i. 18 f. ; cp. Heb. ix. 14, x. 19 ; Rev. i. 5) ; as he learned what it was to have a part with Him, Ps. xxiv. 3 f., xxvi. 6 ; cp. Col. i. 12 ff. ; Rev. xxi. 8, xxii. 19.

saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands  
 10 and *my* head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth  
 not, save to wash *his* feet, but is clean every whit; and ye are  
 11 clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him;  
 12 therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. So, after he had  
 washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set  
 down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done  
 13 to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well;

9. *Simon Peter saith to Him—head.* No thought was so terrible to him as that of forfeiting communion with his Master. He will submit to anything, however hard to flesh and blood, rather than lose his Lord's fellowship and kingdom. He flies from the extreme of resistance to the extreme of compliance. There spoke a true and noble soul.

10. *Jesus saith to him, He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.* Jesus draws a distinction between the man who is bathed and the man who is not, and between the bathing of the whole body and the washing of the feet. Simon needed the latter, not the former. To be justified is to be as if bathed, clean every whit; clean in principle, root, heart; because faith, laying hold of Jesus as the cleanser from sin, works in the element of the Holy Spirit and brings the new creation with it. "To as many as received Him gave He right to become the children of God . . . who were born . . . of God," "born of water and of the Spirit," i. 12 f., iii. 5. And this is an act of Divine grace done once for all. Sanctification is a daily process, and a necessary process. Simon was justified; "bathed" through his faith in Christ; he was a new man. Yet his conduct, as that of all the disciples, showed that the old man was not yet dead, that a growing work of holiness was needful upon him, freeing him from such stains and sins as had just been apparent in the unseemly strife. An important passage—bearing on the difference between justification and sanctification. There is a tendency to work away on lines of *character*, which insensibly glides into self-righteousness. It is good if we are ever bringing ourselves up into this light, for "by grace are we saved through faith." But grace is not grace if it does not do and has not done all. We need to look at the root as well as the fruit. *And ye are clean, but not all*, cp. xv. 3. This was encouraging, affirming their acceptance with God, and banishing doubt and fear from every true and sensitive heart. Yet the encouragement had the solemn suggestion in it, solemn for all, that it was not simply because they were so near to the Lord outwardly, and enjoying so many privileges, that they were clean; a searching word at the time, a last warning to the traitor, whose heart, even the washing of his feet by the Master he purposed to betray, could not soften. As necessary to convince Judas he was known, as to reassure the others after the death and resurrection that their Lord had foreseen all things.

11. *For—clean*, vi. 64.

12 f. *So when—am.* Jesus now adds the explanation of His remarkable act, emphasizing His own position as Master and Lord to make His inference more cogent. Humility taught often by *word* is here taught by *fact*.

13-20. The Master's example is binding on the disciples, for the disciple is inferior to the Master; and it is obedience, not knowledge, which makes blessed. Not that He is in doubt of all of them; He knows His elect ones

14 for so I am. If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed  
 15 your feet ; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I  
 have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done  
 16 to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not  
 greater than his lord ; neither he that is sent greater than he  
 17 that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye  
 do them.

18 I speak not of you all ; I know whom I have chosen : but,

well ; but there is treason in the midst of them (and He must point it out), that the scripture may be fulfilled, "He that," etc. That He foretells it before the event, will strengthen their faith in Him after it. Finally, reverting to the inferences from such an act, He assures them that what is done to His servants is done to Himself.

14 f. *If therefore I—feet.* To wash one another's feet means that there is the obligation on the disciple of Christ to all lowliest services for his brethren, of love and humility, especially to such as bear on their spiritual and eternal interests. We are bound by our tie to Christ to be tender and considerate towards our fellow-Christians, to serve them by love ; pride, superiority, rank have no place in the Church of Christ. The only rank there is the rank of service. What the Lord and Master condescended to do, we may and must do, 1 Tim. v. 10 ; 1 John iii. 16 ff. Every one wants ascendancy. Nobody wants to serve. The ecclesiastical ceremony of Maundy Thursday is a burlesque on this command of the Lord.

15. *For—you.* In this act, as in a mirror, Christ's whole earthly life is reflected in spirit and aim, and Christ's life is the believer's pattern, cp. xv. 12.

16. *Verily—him,* Matt. x. 24 ; Luke vi. 40. Perhaps the R. V. is preferable, *one that is sent* instead of *apostle* : the primary signification instead of the derived. What the Master can afford to do the servant may well do ; and if the Master does this for the servant, one servant may well do it for another. In the kingdom of God the greater exists for the less. But one might say, The Master is always the Master. He cannot forfeit His place. But *we*, the servants, have to keep ours. That is just what Christ says they are not to think about. Thought of this is often the cause of our failing in this duty.

17. *If—them.* Jas. i. 22 ; Ps. lxxxix. 15. The word for full knowledge, as that in ver. 12 is the word for less exact comprehension. *Blessed are ye*, etc., rather than *Happy*, etc. This sudden divergence to the danger of knowledge of duty unattended by conscientious effort to perform it, not unnatural after the obvious statement of ver. 16 ; meeting their implied : "Of course we all are aware of that !" With an undertone of sadness, too, giving a pointed hint to the traitor. How easy to profess Christ, yet shrink from this typically Christian duty ! Nothing pleases us more than the theory ; nothing harder than to be lowly and serving in love.

18. *Not of all of you do I speak* : either referring to what was just said about knowledge and obedience, reassuring the loyal eleven that they will give what He expects from them ; or going back again to ver. 10 f. *I know whom I have chosen*, xv. 16. The knowledge of love and trust. The Divine foreknowledge that moved Him to choose them as the ordained instruments of His will. The testimony of the Holy Spirit in the believer assures him

that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with  
 19 me hath lifted up his heel against me. Now I tell you before  
 it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I  
 20 am *he*. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth  
 whomsoever I send, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me,

that his Lord has "called him by his name." And the irrevocable character of the calling of God into Christ's fellowship, and the conviction of prevenient grace, become, as here to these men, in our hours of anxiety the strongest foundation for faith. This encourages amid all defects, if we are really clinging to Christ. It is significant that in vi. 70, where Jesus uses this word of all the twelve, He at once expressly excludes the traitor. *But in order that the scripture may be fulfilled.* Fully read, the clause would run so—"But it was necessary that into our circle there should come one who, though with us, was not of us, in order that," etc.; or, "But this also is not apart from Divine decree." The fulfilment of Scripture is an ultimate ground and reason for what is done, according to New Testament consciousness, for Scripture foretells simply what God had decreed to happen. The reconciliation of such necessity with the freewill and naturalness of agents is to be found in the historic unfolding; see ch. xii. 38 ff. It would be too mechanical to suppose Jesus to do a thing merely to fulfil a prophecy (see on xix. 28), and the thing done would stand out of all living, free relation to the present. But Jesus Christ being the focus of all the converging lines of hope, aspiration, prescience, presentiment, could not but live, move, and have His being in an atmosphere of fulfilment. The passage is from Ps. xli. 9, but the Greek of the LXX. is handled freely, hardly a word being exactly the same. The word translated "he that eateth" is the same as that used in vi. 56 ff.—perhaps therefore intentionally used. The psalm seems to have no direct connection with the Messiah; is the complaint of David, or some other saint of God, after restoration from sickness, during which he had had experience of treachery from one who was received and treated as a bosom friend; one who had broken the sacred bond of hospitality. If we bear in mind how, apart from the coming Christ, the Scriptures of the Old Testament could not have come into existence at all, that texts should be taken apparently at haphazard out of it to apply to Christ need not surprise us. It is all the more remarkable that these Scriptures are the free expression of men who felt themselves under the training and guiding of God's Spirit.

19. *From henceforth—he*, vi. 64. Power to foretell events argued Divine knowledge. The betrayal by Judas was something so astounding that the disciples otherwise might have wondered if Jesus had foreseen it all, or might have made shipwreck of their own faith. It would be interesting as a study in our Lord's human nature to inquire how far His deep and long-continued acquaintance with the Old Testament gave shape to His anticipations of His own future experiences.

The connection seems broken. Christ was discomposed by the persistent presence of Judas.

20. *Verily, etc.—me*, Matt. x. 40; Luke x. 16. A solemn announcement, corresponding exactly to that of ver. 16. Though the servant is inferior to his lord, what is done to Christ's servant, Christ will value as if done to Himself; as what is done to Christ, God values as if done to Himself. His servants share His greatness. Both an incentive to them to do as their

21 receiveth him that sent me. When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, 22 I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. 23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, 24 whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. 25 He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

Master did to them, and an encouragement as they go forth on their great work in the authority of God, Matt. xxv. 40. He who washed their feet must be received as God Himself. Every brother must be received as Christ. But He cannot say more in this line until none but friends are with Him.

2. *Exposure and dismissal of Judas Iscariot*, vers. 21-30. Jesus had hoped (we must speak after the manner of men) that the traitor would take this hint and leave—even at the last moment might he still be arrested on the downward slope?—but in vain. Judas was as composed as the rest, and more so; and made no sign. Jesus, longing to unbosom Himself to His true disciples, and to feel alone with them, proceeds therefore reluctantly to discover the traitor, and render it impossible for him to remain. The scene is evidently from the lips or pen of an eye-witness.

21. *Troubled in the spirit*; see xi. 33, xii. 27. The spirit, as the seat of higher spiritual sensibility. (In xii. 27 it is "soul.") *Testified, and said*. It was a *testimony* to His own Divine foreknowledge, and to His own Divine nature. *Verily, verily*, etc. The third time this solemn utterance occurs in this short passage. We can hardly conceive the anguish in Christ's spirit at this hour, having to make such a disclosure to His chosen followers. It is wonderful to think of the restraint placed on Jesus by the presence of Judas, and how long He bore it. Ver. 22. *Doubting*. All were bewildered but one. They doubted their own hearts. Their sense of innocence was not so reliable as the Master's word. It was a solemnizing discipline for them to have had such close fellowship with one who went to the pit. None would triumph in his own steadfastness: rather would say, "It might have been I." The success with which Judas had hid his disloyalty is in itself a tribute to his self-control.

23. *In Jesus' bosom*. The Oriental custom of reclining at meals (also the Jewish after the exile), when the guests were close to each other, explains this fact. And the following clause, *whom Jesus loved*, explains why John was next to the Master, xix. 26, xxi. 7, 20; see on xi. 5. The first time John so designates himself. It was left to the evangelist himself to use this remarkable phrase—(1.) Not *who loved Jesus*, but *whom Jesus loved*, disclosing the character of Jesus more than that of John. (2.) The contrast to Judas is marked. (3.) Particular affections were found in Jesus as in ourselves. He loves each disciple for what he is, with a love that is all his own. Ver. 24. *Simon Peter therefore beckons*; Acts xxiv. 10. *Tell us who it is of whom He speaks?* The words were likely spoken in a whisper, as were John's own question to Christ, and Christ's answer. Ver. 25. *He leaning back as he was on the breast of Jesus* (R.V.); the action understood from his position, and hardly perceptible in consequence to others. John himself ignorant, as all were but one.

26 Jesus answered, He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped *it*. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave  
 27 *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon. And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That  
 28 thou doest, do quickly. Now no man at the table knew for  
 29 what intent he spake this unto him. For some of *them* thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto

26. *It is he to whom I shall dip the sop and give it.* A piece of the unleavened bread which Jesus, as the father of the household, dipped into some kind of sauce, and reached to Judas. *Having dipped, therefore, the sop, He takes and gives it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot*; so R.V. (Probably it was at this juncture that Judas put the question, also softly, Is it I? Matt. xxvi. 25.) "In the course of the Paschal meal the father of the family used to offer to the guests pieces of bread or meat dipped in a sauce composed of fruit boiled in wine" (Godet).

27. *And after the sop, then Satan entered into him.* What a moment in the history of a soul! Life and death, heaven and hell, God and the devil, contending for him; and the scale going to eternal misery and loss! Luke xxii. 3. Possibly the evil conscience of Judas marked the question of John and the significance of this action of Jesus, which was unobserved by the rest, rather diverting the attention of the rest; and instead of softening his heart as he saw the proof of the Lord's kindness to him to the last, he only hardened it the more, rejecting this final, unutterably tender appeal, and prepared the way for the full Satanic indwelling which at once followed; or, perhaps, it is truer to fact to say that the entering in of Satan produced the hardening of the heart. Satan injected the suggestion of betrayal; see ver. 2. He personally possessed the unhappy man's soul to carry out the suggestion. The figurative expression, "to enter into," always used of this awful personal influence in the New Testament, conveys the highest degree of moral hardening: the absorption of the human personality in the Satanic; and also the idea of a foreign, alien element or influence. The Holy Spirit is never said to "enter in;" the symbols used of His possession of the heart—"to pour out," "to receive," "to abide in," "to dwell within," etc., rather imply, on the contrary, a power kindred to the spirit of man, a gentle and gracious influence. *Jesus therefore saith to him, That thou doest, do [more] quickly.* Jesus perceived His last appeal was in vain, that the irrevocable resolve had come into the mind of Judas; perceived that His own mercy and kindness were fruitless; that the soul of His disciple was sold into hands that would never let it go. The doom of the wretched man was sealed. Jesus therefore begged Him to finish his work speedily, as He desired him to leave the company. Christ gave the signal for His own betrayal. He laid His life down of Himself; and there is no more difficulty in understanding how He could give the word of command to the traitor, than that on the cross He should voluntarily end His sufferings and commend His spirit to His Father.

28 f. *Now—poor.* Not even John or Peter suspected that the betrayal was so near. They were still bewildered at the disclosure, and could not bring themselves to believe Judas could be so bad, much less that his villany was on the point of being consummated. Only Judas knew what Jesus meant. *Against the feast*: implying that the night of the Passover was not

him; Buy *those things* that we have need of against the feast ;  
 30 or, that he should give something to the poor. He then,  
 having received the sop, went immediately out ; and it was  
 night.

31 Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the  
 32 son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be  
 glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and

*this night, but the following. The poor, cp. xii. 5. Ver. 30. He then, having received the sop, went immediately out ; and it was night.* One of those graphic touches, revealing the hand of an eye-witness. The interview with the priests, recorded in Matt. xxvi. 14 ff., Mark xiv. 10 f., Luke xxii. 3 ff., may have taken place now, unless the business had been previously arranged. It is difficult to avoid seeing a symbolic allusion in the word *night*. It was night, as Origen says, in the soul of Judas—"This is your hour and the power of darkness," Luke xxii. 53. The fact evidently laid hold of the imagination of the apostle. Judas went out into his own congenial element, that he might go to his own place.

3. 31-38. Relieved of the presence of the traitor, Jesus announces that His mission on earth is about to be consummated to God's glory and His own; that He is about to leave them; but that their mutual love will thenceforth bear witness to Him as their Lord; and foretells Peter's denial. Note the most perfect reticence of Jesus with regard to the traitor after he left; no vilifying or exposing of him. How Divine! We should feel disposed to insert the institution of the Lord's Supper at this point, but with the conflicting accounts of Luke, Matthew, and Mark it is not easy to determine.

31. *Now*: nothing was now intervening between His betrayal and death, so far as events lay in the will of man. Everything was in train. Judas was in the devil's hands, and was being urged on to the fatal and irrevocable step. *Was [is] the Son of Man glorified, and God was [is] glorified in Him.* If the past tense is adopted, which the aorist in Greek seems to require, as well as the following *future* in ver. 32, the reference would be to the fact that with the departure of Judas to betray Him—in all the circumstances of the case—His mission on earth closes; and as all along, so now too at the end,—and no less though the end is what it is through the treachery of a disciple,—the Son of Man was glorified, and God in Him. Though there is a dark, diabolic side, there is also a Divine side. "Him being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," etc., Acts ii. 23. To limit the reference to the personal dealing of Jesus with Judas at the supper-table would be too stiff; yet that marvellous forbearance and love, when an ordinary man would have (if cognizant of the designs) exploded into righteous indignation, or at least have exposed the traitor before the rest, or after his dismissal, may be fitly regarded as crowning the self-denying mission of the Saviour, and yielding an eternal glory to Himself, and through Him to God. On the term "glorified," see on vii. 39; cp. also xii. 23, 28, xvii. 1. Ver. 32. The first clause, *If God be glorified in him*, is omitted in R.V. on good grounds. Read, therefore, *And God will glorify Him [i.e. Jesus] in Himself, and He will straightway glorify Him.* The active career of the Son of Man now closing by His free self-surrender

- 33 shall straightway glorify him. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me : and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come ; so now I say to you.
- 34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.
- 35 By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

to death, in all of which the fulness of Divine grace and truth has been revealed, has glorified both Himself and God through Him. In the last tragic act of the cross, on the eve of consummation, with the agony and sufferings leading to it, God is as if taking the matter into His own hands, and will no less dispose all to His own glory and to His Son's through Him. Such also is the line of thought in xvii. 1, 4 f. The glory of God is the glory of the Son of Man ; and conversely.

33. *Little children.* The first and only occasion in the Gospel where this word is used, and the occasion suitable. In xxi. 5 it is a different word. *Yet a little—you*, vii. 34, viii. 21. It was the same utterance to both friend and enemy : but the moral significance of Christ's departure differed for friend and for enemy. He does not say to His own, "Ye shall not find me ;" cp. xvi. 7, 16. Another proof to them after the events of the cross that their Master knew all that would happen to Him beforehand.

34. *A new commandment—one another.* The fine shading of Greek tenses attempted to be done into English in the margin of the R.V. produces no change in the meaning of the passage. [*Even as I loved you, that ye also may love one another.*] The commandment was not entirely strange to the Old Testament, Lev. xix. 18, but the example embodied in the Lord Jesus Christ of a love seeking not its own, and going to the extreme of self-sacrifice for its object—and its object unworthy—was new. Hence the "as" includes both *fact, measure, manner, and motive*, xv. 12 ff. He had just given them an instance, ver. 15. To love God with all the heart, and the neighbour as oneself, is the sum of the old covenant. To love one another as Christ has loved us, is the sum of the new covenant. The two are essentially one ; but Love, God's love, has been now manifested, 1 John iii. 16, iv. 10. The departure of their Lord should therefore become the means of drawing them into a closer brotherhood, as if to make some amends for their loss. They should grow spiritually. That mutual love, after the pattern of Christ's, should be a witness to *themselves* of their Lord's continual presence with them. The more they loved one another for Christ's sake, and in Christ's way, they should realize Himself as among them. The question if this love be not narrower in its circle than that of the Old Testament since a "disciple" is more definite than a "neighbour," is more a difference in appearance than in reality. For if we follow the example of Christ, what we have before our eyes must be that love which prompted Him while men were yet sinners to die for them, Rom. v. 8. Besides, a "neighbour," in the Old Testament, meant a brother Israelite in the covenant of God. It was left for Christ to widen out its application, 1 John ii. 8. 35. *By this—another.* By this mutual self-sacrificing love—not by wonderful deeds, miracles, and the like—the fact and test of Christian discipleship are given to the world. Their mutual love should also be a witness to the world of the fact, power and nature of an unseen Lord, 1 John iv. 12 f.

36 Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou?  
 Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me  
 37 now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. Peter said unto  
 him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down  
 38 my life for thy sake. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay  
 down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee,  
 The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.  
 CHAP. XIV. 1. Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in

36-38. Simon's blind impulse checked, and his self-confidence humbled. An incident in the training of the individual disciple.

36. *Simon Peter—afterwards*, xxi. 22. Loyalty, and yet unsubmissiveness too, excited the question. The answer of Jesus meant, What is not needful for present practical use is not needful to know. The hint as to the future implied the baptism with Christ's baptism of suffering, as well as the share of His glory. By *following* Him, Jesus pointed to the whole moral and spiritual condition of Peter; to his ability to give himself up to the will of God in love for Him and for men, enduring every consequence. Simon should have thought more of His Lord's new commandment, and of the means of obeying it; cp. ver. 7, to which this exactly corresponds. Simon should have been content with the assurance of future disclosure of all that was now dark. But he was not. 37. *Peter—sake*, Luke xxii. 33. Peter was determined to prove that whatever might hinder him from following his Lord, the cause would not be lack of love to Him. 38. *Jesus—thrice*. A solemn and humbling warning, which, according to the other accounts, Simon was too self-confident to take, Matt. xxvi. 35, Mark xiv. 31, and the rest were also anxious to disown disloyalty. The announcement that one should prove faithless had not had its proper effect in humbling Peter.

CH. XIV. The disclosure of treason in their number, their Master's announcement of His departure, the humbling of Simon Peter, had filled the disciples with a vague sense of uneasiness and dismay, as men on the verge of an impending and unknown calamity. The Lord proceeds to comfort them—(1) with the sure hope that, though He must leave them, He and they shall meet again, never to part (1-4); (2) with the clear intimation that He is the personal revelation of the Father (5-11); (3) with the assurance that their faith in Him, *because He is absent*, will make them stronger men (12-15); (4) with the promise of another Comforter who will abide with them for ever, under whose guidance their knowledge, love, joy, and peace should deepen (16-end).

1. 1-4. Jesus comforts the disciples with the prospect of an eternal reunion. 1. *Let not your heart be troubled*. It was their *heart*, as the seat of the emotions, which was concerned in the loss of their Friend and Master. The word *troubled* is the same as is used of Christ Himself, xiii. 21, xii. 27, xi. 33, indicating deep agitation. Jesus furnishes them with comfort by setting before them an object of *faith*, of *hope*, and of *love* respectively. 1. *Faith*. *Ye believe in God, believe also in me*. The sense is not altered if we take the first clause imperatively: *Believe in God*, etc. Jesus Himself is an object of faith, as trustworthy as God. The faith which as pious Israelites they cherish towards the God of their fathers and of promise, is to be transferred simply to

- 2 God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to  
 3 prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that  
 4 where I am, *there* ye may be also. And whither I go ye

their Master. The claim of equality with God is obvious. The first and highest ground of comfort to the Christian disciple is therefore to trust Christ as his God.

2. *Hope.* 2. *In my Father's house—you.* There is a Father, and there is a Father's home, and in that home many dwellings ("abodes" or dwelling-places only here and ver. 23), awaiting them in the other world. And Jesus therefore, in leaving them, is going to His home and their home, Heb. ii. 10. Heaven is the true home-life, with the Father's heart the spring of all the affection, and the Father's presence the pledge of its permanence. All that we yearn for of a love that will never fade or disappoint,—the love that we feel we are made for, a resting-place that shall never cast us adrift, our own place, our own home, love answering love, heart responding to heart,—is there. As the heart after a lifetime turns back to the home and parental affection that shielded childhood, so the heart of the Christian disciple yearns for the Father's house. With every home comfort and feeling, there is to be also in that better life an amplitude of blessing, a sphere for every capacity, a congenial task for each; all the tender love of *home*; all the infinite wealth and variety of a *world*. In adding that if such hopes were baseless He would have told them, Jesus seems to guarantee those deep instincts of human nature as correct interpreters of God's mind toward man, as well as to confirm every hope which His own words may raise. And the reason He gives: *For I go to prepare a place for you* (for in R. V.), cp. the analogous thought in Heb. vi. 20, ix. 28,—indicates as it were a right on their part to know and to be interested in all that He is doing; as it implies that whatever engages Him in the other world is only on their behalf. He and they are for ever identified. While the Master cannot take His disciple into fullest confidence as yet on all points, nothing which serves his true interests will be hid from him. The preparation of a place for them in the Father's house is the opening of the kingdom of heaven to all believers by His mediation and intercession. It is also the preparation of believers for the inheritance, through the application to them of the merits of His atoning death, and the continuous work in them of His Holy Spirit. Without the forerunner's preparation there is no entrance for men into the Father's house, ver. 6.

3. *Love.* 3. *And if I go—also.* Notice the repetition, so frequent an occurrence in John's writings. R. V. reads, *I come again*, in place of, *I will come again*: a change which makes the thought more lively. Christ's return is as certain as His departure was: *If I go, I will*, etc. But note the different points of view from which His second coming is regarded here as compared with the other Gospels. Jesus is to come to carry His own with Him to His home and glory. He is not to come to set up a kingdom on earth, and reign over His own here. Of course these are two differing points of view; not contradictory truths. The future destiny and glory of the servant of Christ are to be with his Lord for ever. A place in heaven would be nothing unless it meant this. Jesus interprets the deepest wants of His disciples' hearts in saying, *That where I am, there you may be also*. The coming again of Christ, and the gathering round Him of His disciples, is the end of this dispensation of grace; the death of the indi-

5 know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest ; and how can we know the

vidual Christian is a going home to the Father (xiii. 1), a departing to be with Christ ; but all that lies between the present going away of Jesus and His return is foreshortened. "I go away, and I come again to you" (ver. 28). The death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and His second coming to reign for ever over men, are the two great landmarks in Christian experience. Ver. 4. *And whither I go, ye know the way.* Omit with R.V. the first *ye know.* You might be doubtful of others—not of me. The words are enigmatical ; intended to lead simply to another and deeper view of His own Person and work, as He immediately explains, ver. 6. As a place in the Father's house is identified with personal fellowship with Himself, so the participation in the joys of the life above is identified with the knowledge of the way leading to it. Heaven is Christ, and the way to heaven is also Christ. They are not to be translated to heaven at once ; and so the knowledge of the way to it, and assurance that they are travelling on it,—sure of reaching the end,—are even more important for them to contemplate. Jesus goes by the way in which He lived ; a kind of life unmistakeably pointing towards God as source and goal. We conjecture where a man is going by the life he lives. The end is shrouded up in darkness ; but it must be consistent with all that we can see. The place to which Jesus was going out of their sight they knew well must be such as the way He walked on daily before them would naturally end in. Such a life as His could not be a failure—it must have results.

2. 5-II. The second ground of comfort is the fact that their Lord is the personal revelation of the Father. 5. *Thomas saith—way* (*How know we the way?* R.V.). Thomas was one of those men who always keep well within the limits of their knowledge. Some would be silent ; some trying to believe they knew what Christ said they knew ; some doubtful, but afraid to confess it. It is always well to have a Thomas, who speaks for others bluntly what others would fain express. Thomas was always desponding. 6. *Jesus—me. I am the way,* etc. To know Him is to know all : Christ is the way ; Christ is the end. "Christ is the end, for Christ is the beginning ; Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ" (Myers). He reveals, procures, confers the way and benefits of salvation. The disciples had not hitherto discovered that their Lord was *final* : they looked on to something else to which He was to conduct them. "I am," not "I reveal." Jesus Himself taken into our hearts is our life ; He is more than a mere prophet of truth ; more than the pointer-out of the way. Having Him, we know we have all God's truth, and share God's life. He is the *Way* from this world to the other ; the reconciler of things on earth and things in heaven : the new and living way through His blood, Heb. x. 19 f. He is the *Way*, so that those who are on it know whither it leads them, and are assured of its safety and their certainty of reaching the Father as they walk by it. So He is the *Truth* : truth for mind, heart, and will ; in Him God is revealed in holiness and love as the Father, 1 John v. 20. He is not simply a teacher of truth. Truth is in Him. We have truth only as being in personal relation to Him the True One, Rev. iii. 7. Hence truth in the sphere of morals as in that of mind. The whole man becomes true. Jesus is the *Life*, see xi. 26, i. 4, iii. 16, 36, v. 26, and vi. 33, x. 10, 28 ; the highest relation of all ; life in the fullest sense ; the life which God intended man to have, and made man capable of enjoying ;

6 way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and  
 7 the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye  
 had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and  
 8 from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip  
 saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

its source in God; its support in His fellowship; and in duration eternal as God's own, see xx. 31; 1 John v. 12; cp. Paul's, "I live no more, but Christ liveth in me," Gal. ii. 20. Perhaps it is permissible to see an allusion in these three relations to the priestly, prophetic, and kingly offices of Christ respectively, as Christ is the revealer, procurer, and bestower of the salvation and life of God. "Without the way there is no going, without the truth there is no knowing, without the life there is no living," *De Imitatione Christi*, ch. lvi. *No man cometh to the Father but by [through] me.* The Father then is the *End*, whither the way leads. The life of Christ was that of Sonship; and the faith in Him that constitutes us sons will bring us, through our sonship, which is love, trust, obedience, self-sacrifice, to the Father at last. None but sons shall come to the Father's house or to the Father's fellowship now; and none are sons who do not, through faith and the regenerating spirit (i. 12 f.), share the life of sonship in the only-begotten Son of God. The negative form of expression is instructive. Men are tempted to forget the necessity and nature of the mediation of Christ. Christ has revealed the Father: He has revealed the true life of sonship: He has made and merited our access to the Father, Eph. ii. 18. 7. *If ye—Him*; see viii. 19, and cp. ver. 1. If to believe in Himself was the same as to believe in God, to know Him was the same as to know the Father. *From henceforth.* Jesus had not spoken so plainly before. If knowledge of the Son is knowledge of the Father, the Church's conclusions as to the Godhead of the Son are justified. The sum of Christ's answer is: *I am the way, and the Father is the end*; but I am more than the way, I am the fulness of truth and life. Beyond me you have no discovery to make, no deeper fulness of life to enjoy. No disciple need say in my presence that there is anything he does not know. For I am the only means of reaching the Father; and, indeed, to have known and seen me is to have known and seen the Father. 8. Thomas remains silent, but Philip puts a question, which reveals the slow, cautious disciple we already know, vi. 7, xii. 21; the man who wants proof positive of everything, and will believe only what he sees. *Lord—us.* Jesus had just said that knowledge of Himself was equivalent to knowledge of the Father. Philip missed the wonderful inference. Jesus was bringing them to the revelation of *character*; Philip thought of a revelation of outer glory, like that given to Moses or Elijah. Though his apprehension was defective, he would not have asked his Lord to do this great thing if he had not had much faith in Him. His state of mind, more or less, reflected that of most of the disciples. *Sufficeth us*: as proof that Thou art all Thou hast said, as firm ground of our faith and hope: even though Thou leavest us. We want no more. To see the Father is all we need. And if Thou canst show Him, Thou art all we take Thee to be. Yet it is the pathos of the heart's instinctive yearning for a Father—a Father's heart, a Father's home—in God. Sight not faith, in short, that will indeed suffice, and nothing else can. Philip wanted something tenderer than the God of hosts, yet in the same form of revelation. 9. *Jesus saith—Father?* R.V., *dost thou not know me?* for hast thou not

9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou *then*, Show us the  
 10 Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the  
 11 works. Believe me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father  
 12 in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily,

*known me?* (Not, "Have you been so long with me?" which would lead the thought to His own power of self-disclosure, rather than to Philip's power of discernment.) How could you see me and hear me so long without feeling that you were in the presence of ultimate reality and life? Philip had failed to grasp the significance of such a personality as that of His Lord. Christ's method was such that those looking for a theophany or brilliant effects might easily miss "the glory as of the Only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." So it is still. *He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.* One of the greatest assertions of the Gospel. The revelation of Christ is the full revelation of God; and the revelation of the fulness of Godhead, namely, the Fatherhood and love. It is but the inference from the other great assertion: "I and the Father are one," x. 30. The true apprehension of Christ is the apprehension of God. "How dost thou say," etc., of whom I would have expected more, and who didst once say, We have found the Messiah! 10 f. *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?* x. 38, vi. 57. A mode of personal relation inexplicable except on the supposition of the closest possible union and communion; and therefore of essential equality. *The words which I speak [say, R. V.] unto you, I speak not [from] myself,* viii. 26, 28, 38, 40, 47, vii. 16, iii. 34. *But the Father, abiding in me, doeth His works* (so R. V.), x. 25, 37 f., ix. 4, v. 19 f., 36, xv. 24. The essential union of the Father and Son is witnessed both by the words spoken, including generally Christ's character, and the works done by Him. *Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, i.e.* take my word for it (contrast the expression for full saving faith in ver. 12, "He that believeth *on me*." See on iv. 50.) *But if not, believe for the very works' sake.* Jesus argues that on sufficient grounds He can call them to believe His own personal testimony for the truth of His assertion of essential oneness with God. But if they should waver, He asks them to draw the inference from the remarkable works done in His ministry. The impression left by the personal character and teaching of Jesus is the highest evidence; and yet a certain order of minds is affected more powerfully by the miraculous. The totality of Christ's witness to Himself lies in both. In thus replying to Philip, Jesus points out to him where he should look for the true and full disclosure of the Father; and attempts to get him to perceive that the glory he desires to see is to be seen in Himself, *i.e.* the glory of a stainless character; of true human relations to God and to man; of words that were spirit and life; the disclosure continually made through all the days of fellowship; and the glory, though Christ did not emphasize this so sharply, of works of super-human power and fatherly goodness exerted on men. No spectacular display could be more God-like, more convincing, *more fatherly*, than the whole life and ministry of Jesus Christ. This is the true, final theophany.

verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than these shall  
 13 he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be

3. Their faith in Him will make them stronger men, because He is absent, vers. 12-14. Jesus promises them an increased power *in work*, ver. 12, and *in prayer*, vers. 13, 14. As Jesus is the manifestation of the Father, their faith in Him will make them manifest the same Divine glory and power. As the Father is seen in what Jesus is and has done, so He will be seen in what they are and shall do, through faith in His name. The disclosure which Philip seeks shall be made, not outside of him and the rest, but actually *through them*, as and because through their Lord. And again, one evidence that Jesus is the personal revealer of the Father is to be found in the manifestation of His power and love through His disciples. (1) Increase of power in work. *Verily, verily*: solemn and weighty utterance, which might not at first be credited. *He that believeth on me*; see previous verse; the entire surrender of mind, heart, and will to Christ. *The works which I do shall He do also; and greater works than these shall He do; because I go to the Father*. Faith in Christ makes His disciples sharers in His life, and therefore in His power. They should be in Him and He in them, as He is in the Father and the Father in Him. Understand by *the works which I do*, the whole revelation of the grace and truth of God for men in Christ's earthly ministry. The call of the Christian disciple is to transmit this as disclosed to himself, revealed in himself (Gal. i. 16) through faith in the Lord Jesus; and the Holy Spirit gives him the needful endowment. The disciples at this hour might think more of the outward acts of miraculous power than of the continuous testimony to a Divine spring of life within—of love, truth, holiness, self-devotion. But they would learn the deep meaning of Christ's manifestation in course of time, and wherein the real power lay. And that the power of Christ was not to leave the world with Him, but to go on propagating itself through the disciples in virtue of their faith in Him, was a proof of His unity with the Father. Without faith in Christ, however, there is neither experience of His power nor ability. *Greater works*, etc. Not in higher measures of miracle or teaching, for who could surpass those of Jesus? The preaching of the apostles, having for its subject a dying and a risen Christ, seated at God's right hand, was more effectual than Christ's personal ministry, as matter of course involving the foundation and building up of the Church, conversion of individual souls, the spiritual miracles of regeneration, the whole work of the Spirit in preparing men for communion with God hereafter, saving them from sin, and sanctifying them. A personally present Christ is accordingly less powerful than a Christ invisible, but reigning at the right hand of God, and revealing His Spirit in a Christian man. Then the contrast is not so much between Jesus and His disciples as between Jesus here on earth, Jesus in humiliation, and Jesus in heaven with the Father, Jesus in exaltation, since the greater works of His disciples depend on His going to the Father. (2) Increase of power in prayer. 13. *And whatsoever ye shall ask [pray] in my name, that will I do*; see xv. 7, xvi. 23, 24, 26. To ask *in the name of one*, is to use His name as a plea, as a recommendation why our request should be granted. It is sinking personal claims and advancing the claims and merits of another. It is as if this other were speaking through

14 glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name,  
I will do it.

15, 16 If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will

us, and we can ask in another's name what we would shrink from asking in our own. Christ lends us His name, all His personal influence with the Father in our favour. And that influence is omnipotent, with all the influence in the mention of it that arises from His personal merit as our Mediator and Intercessor. Then, "as He is, so are we in this world." But we must be identified ourselves with the spirit and interests of Christ, so that in naming this name we are departing from iniquity, and are as sensitive as Christ Himself to all that affects the honour of His name. Further, the right to hear and answer is in His own hands. If the idea of doing greater works than their Lord filled them with searching thoughts of their responsibility and their inability, this promise reassures them. If they feel their need, they have but to ask, in His name, and He will supply their need. *That the Father may be glorified in the Son.* Not to make them think highly of themselves, to foster vanity or the like, but to advance the glory of the Father in the Son by their means, to make them realize this great object of their endowment with spiritual power to serve God, not themselves. A rule for guidance as to prayer is also given in these words, to ask nothing whereby, if granted, the Father would not be glorified in the Son. 14. *If ye shall ask [pray] [me] anything in my name, I will do it.* The promise is so wonderful, that, as if in answer to their secret surprise of heart, Jesus says, Yes, it is true, I really mean it. These three verses (12-14) may be called the Magna Charta of the disciples of Christ, acting together for the interests of His kingdom. "By prayer in the name of Jesus the apostles brought forth the Church."

4. The fourth ground of comfort is the promise of the Holy Spirit, 15-end. There are various stages in this part of Christ's discourse. (1) 15-17. Obedience is the proof of love to Him, and to help them another Comforter, the Spirit of truth, will be sent. (2) 18-21. The presence of the Spirit of truth implies His own spiritual presence and self-disclosure, with great results for them. (3) 22-24. A question by Judas, not Iscariot, who does not understand a disclosure to disciples which is withheld from others, leads to the repetition, with greater emphasis, of Christ's spiritual manifestation and its effects. (4) 25, 26. So much He can tell them now; as to the rest, the promise is renewed of the Holy Spirit, and His effective teaching of all that is now dark. (5) 27-end. His legacy to them is His own peace. They would rejoice at His going away did they know all it meant for Him and them. The event of the future will confirm faith in Him. He has all but finished what He has to say, for the prince of this world is preparing for His last deadly assault, which will be in vain; to which, however, His love and obedience to the Father induce Him to submit.

(1.) 15-17. 15. *If—commandments.* Their love to Him is proved by their obedience. The connection of this verse may be with the foregoing, as if to remind them that, after all, not such wonderful power in work and prayer, but simple, hearty obedience to His will, was the best proof of love. Or it may be the introduction to the great promise that follows, a promise which could be fulfilled only to love and obedience. Note the connection between *love and the Spirit*, the existence of love among Christians, one toward another

pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter,  
 17 that he may abide with you for ever; *even* the spirit of truth;  
 whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not,  
 neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth

and toward God, and the possession of the fulness of the Spirit's blessed influences being coincident. The life of power and prayer is that of loving obedience, and the promise of the Holy Spirit is bound to the whole conception; because if He is needful for strength in work and prayer, He is no less needful to cherish love and maintain obedience. The commonplace obediences of love testify to Him quite as much as the higher reaches of spiritual work. 16. *And I will ask the Father.* The R.V. retains *pray*, as in A.V., putting *make request of* in the margin (not the same word, note, as in 13 f.,—prayer of a suppliant, of an inferior). The word in Greek, to quote Trench, "implies on the part of the asker a certain equality, as of king with king (Luke xiv. 32), or, if not equality, familiarity with him from whom the gift or favour is sought, which lends authority to the request" (*Synonyms of the New Testament*). Cp. xvi. 26, xvii. 9, 15, 20. The request is made as of right. *And He shall give you another Comforter* [*Advocate, Helper = Paraclete* in Greek]; cp. ver. 26. Perhaps Advocate is nearest in significance. Christ Himself is called by the same word in 1 John ii. 2, "An Advocate with the Father." The literal meaning is, one summoned to aid, Ps. xliii. By calling Him "another," Christ virtually asserts the personality of the Holy Spirit, and His essential equality in the Godhead. The ideas of an impersonal Divine influence, or of an inferior nature, are inadequate to explain the statement here and in the other passages of this section of the Gospel. This other Comforter is the Father's gift to Christ's disciples by Christ's request; He is also, therefore, Christ's own gift, xv. 26. The Father who gave the Spirit not by measure to the Son, iii. 34, gives Him through the Son to His believers. This promise was visibly fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. *That He may be [abide, A.V.] with you for ever.* He will not leave you, as I must. The continual presence of the Spirit in the Church is the pledge of the continuance and prosperity of the Church. But the Church is not a certain fixed quantity, to be mapped out with exactness. To one single believer this promise holds equally valid. 17. *The Spirit of truth.* Truth is the sphere or element in which He works, and truth is the effect He produces on the mind of the receiver; see ver. 26, xv. 26, xvi. 13; 1 John ii. 20, 27. As to the nature of this truth, see on ver. 5 and viii. 32 ff. But there is also a spirit of error, 1 John iv. 6 and ch. viii. 44.

*Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him.* The power of the world, therefore, to save itself by its own wisdom, to lift itself out of evil and misery, to apprehend truth, the truth of God, is hereby denied. As John says, 1 John ii. 16, there are two spirits, that of the Father and that of the world; cp. 1 Cor. ii. 14. The world believes in what it sees—in that only; hence it is the dupe of many spirits of error and falsehood. It recognises the spirit of art, of science, of literature, of social and political advancement; but disconnecting these from the Spirit of God, it begets error in truth, see 1 Cor. ii. 11, 12, 14, 15. *Ye know Him, for He abideth with you, and shall be [is, Westcott and Hort] in you.* The permanent abode of the Spirit of God is in believers in Christ. The world can receive Him only through their means. The Church, *i.e.* believers in Christ.

18 with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfort  
 19 less; I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world  
 seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall  
 20 live also. At that day ye shall know that I *am* in my Father,  
 21 and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my command-  
 ments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that  
 loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him,

exists in the world for the purpose of propagating the Spirit of God's influence; it can always rely on His presence. He is its exclusive possession, and He inhabits each individual Christian. The world can become a Christian world, so far as individual men in it have the Spirit of Christ, and no further. There is a climax in the thought, abideth *with* you—is *in* you; the Spirit is to be found where the people of God are—nay, He is inhabiting each of them.

(2.) 18-21. The presence of the Spirit of truth implies their Lord's presence in another form,—a form invisible to the world, but so real to them that life, and knowledge of the Father and of Christ, and assurance of their love, shall spring out of it for them. 18. *I will not leave you comfortless [orphans]; I am coming to you.* They might feel that no other friend could take the place of their Lord, hence He assures them that the coming of the Spirit and His own return to them are the same.<sup>1</sup> It will be noticed that nowhere does John present the second coming of his Lord as a function of judgment in the manner of the Synoptists, but only as a spiritual power and presence to comfort the believers. The relation of this fact to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish polity generally, with the wider conceptions resulting of what was involved in the coming of Christ, is obvious. 19. *Yet a little while, and the world seeth [beholdeth] me no more; but ye see [behold] me;* cp. ver. 17, and see 2 Cor. v. 16 f. Christ is seen by the inner eye, *i.e.* faith. *Because I live, ye shall live also* (or, *and ye shall live*). In either case meaning that their life depends on, and is derived from, His life. Their vision of Him will therefore be something more than a reminiscence, and their relation something closer than that produced by a mere posthumous influence, even if unforgettable. The life they live, so far from being a vacant and dead thing, because He has disappeared, shall be the continuous evidence to them that He lives, and lives in and with them. 20. *At that day ye shall know—*you. Christ's coming shall be the source to them of a full knowledge of all that life in His life implies, both as to *His* life and *their* own life; His own union and communion with the Father, and of theirs with Him; cp. vi. 56 f., xv. 3, 5. 21. *He that hath—me.* Return to the thought of ver. 15; perhaps to prevent misconception. Obedience to His plain commands is the proof of love. Nothing alters that fundamental principle. In the midst of mysterious truths opening on them, they must remember that love to Him is not to be measured by knowledge of mysteries, or by great privileges to be conferred; simply, as ever, by obedience. Not only so, the common walk of obedience and love leads on to the higher disclosures of which Jesus has been speaking. *And he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.* In ver. 7, *knowledge of the Father* is

<sup>1</sup> The efficacy of the exalted Christ and of the Spirit is co-ordinated by Paul; cp. 2 Cor. iii. 17, "The Lord is the Spirit;" see 1 Cor. xv. 45; Rom. viii. 9, 10. The "power from on high," promised in Luke xxiv. 49, is the perpetual presence of Christ in Matt. xxviii. 20; see Thoma, p. 625, *Die Genesis des Johannes-Evangelium*.

- 22 and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, (not Iscariot,) Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto  
 23 us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make  
 24 our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the  
 25 Father's which sent me. These things have I spoken unto  
 26 you, being *yet* present with you. But the Comforter, *which* is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he

spoken of; here it is the experience of *the Father's love*, and as the reward of love to Jesus. And as there is a manifestation needful to awaken love, there is a higher manifestation which is given to love. Thus the fellowship is in life, knowledge, and love.

(3.) 22-24. Judas does not understand, and asks an explanation. This question being much the same as that of Philip, ver. 8. 22. *Judas, not Iscariot, saith to Him, Lord, [what has happened] how is it that Thou wilt show Thyself to us, and not to the world?* The disciple who is otherwise called Thaddaeus and Lebbaeus. Judging of the promised disclosure by the past, not yet ended, he could not conceive how Jesus should be hid from the world, all the more that a greater outward glory would be attached to the second appearance. 23. *If a man—Him (word, not words).* The Lord repeats what He had just said, making it plain that the manifestation is *spiritual* and *individual*, and given only to the loving heart; cp. Ex. xxix. 45 f.; Ezek. xxxvii. 26 ff.; Rev. xxi. 3. It is the great promise and hope of the Old Testament fulfilled. Observe the stages of the disciple's progress: love to Christ, observance of His word, assurance of the love of the Father, personal experience of the presence and permanent indwelling of Father and Son. Jesus makes it clear that love and loyalty to Himself are the dividing line between men, and that to love and loyalty there is given an experience of God's love and presence which otherwise is denied. Note how in this whole passage the presence of the Spirit of truth, the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and the love and presence of the Father, are all bound up together on the one side; while corresponding to them, on the other, are the love and obedience of the disciple to whom such privileges are given. 24. *He that loveth me not keepeth not my [words] sayings: and—me.* The only passage where the evangelist uses the plural form of *logos*. There is an interchange in these two verses of the singular and plural forms, and while we need not strain the thing, we can perceive the difference between the word, setting Christ forth, and the particular words spoken by Christ Himself, included in the former. In this negative addition the importance of the words of Christ (*i.e.* the whole of the word of the truth of the gospel) is emphasized; inasmuch as (1) one cannot love Christ if he is not observing them; and (2) the word of Christ is the word of the Father Himself, iii. 34, vii. 16, viii. 38, xii. 49.

(4.) 25, 26. What Jesus cannot tell them now, the Comforter will tell them. *The Holy Spirit*; as before, ver. 17, *the Spirit of truth*. Truth should sanctify; and holiness aids up the ladder of truth. The Spirit is holy in His nature, contrasted with the unholy spirits in the world, and He works holiness in the believing heart, 1 Cor. iii. 16 f., vi. 19; 2 Cor.

shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you : not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away,

vi. 16. *Whom the Father will send*; cp. xv. 26, "Whom I will send from the Father;" and xvi. 7, "I will send Him," etc. *In my name*; cp. ver. 13. The Spirit represents the interests of the Son on earth, comes in the authority of the Son, and His mission is to cause every knee to bow at that name, in faith that there is none other name whereby we can be saved. The mission of the Spirit is mediated by the work of the Son; cp. ver. 16. *He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, which I said to you.* The personality and divinity of the Spirit are directly implied. He is to be their teacher, and the subject of His instructions is the teaching which they have already received from their Master. An advance on the statement about the Spirit in ver. 16 f. He is to refresh their memories with it. Christ's word is the sum and substance of all they need to know, as explained to them by this competent interpreter. All the believer's personal profiting in the truth, and all the Church's growth in knowledge, are but an additional reminiscence of Christ and Christ's word. Christ's word is the permanent and sole standard of Christian truth. They need not fear that the things they heard shall escape them, xv. 26, xvi. 13. This is the guarantee that the apostolic witness to Christ is reliable. We are not at the mercy of mere human impressions of Christ's Person and word, however trustworthy in themselves these might be; cp. I John ii. 20, 27; I Cor. ii. 10. Comp. the whole of I Cor. ii. with this teaching about the Comforter, to which it strikingly corresponds.

(5) 27—end. His legacy of peace, and assurance of joy and faith, springing from their apprehension of His true glory. 27. *Peace—afraid.* Perhaps an allusion to the Eastern mode of greeting at parting; when peace, *Shalom*, was wished; cp. *Salaam* of Hindoos. This great gift is inseparable from the work of the Holy Spirit within them. The secret of Christ's peace lay in His assured relation of love to the Father, and submission to the Father's will, ver. 31. To take men into the same relation was the object of His mission, consummated in the death of the cross, by which sacrifice He becomes Himself "our peace," Eph. ii. 14; "making peace by the blood of His cross," Col. i. 20; "peace with God," Rom. v. 1; so that the peace of God which passeth all understanding keeps heart and mind in Christ Jesus, Phil. iv. 7. His first salutation, after the resurrection, to His disciples, was "Peace be unto you!" xx. 19, 21. Peace was the only treasure He could leave, yet it was the most enriching. *Not as the world giveth*; referring either to the manner in which the world gives peace, or to the kind of gifts it bestows. The peace of the world depends on circumstances, which may soon alter; which will certainly cease at death, and a peace which, even at the best, fails to reach and command the deepest springs of our nature. Men bequeath to their children what is meant as a mark of affection, and to secure their comfort, but which too often becomes steps preparing with fatal facility for an unworthy life. The world cannot give peace, whatever else it gives, and any apparent peace is false; Christ gives peace which holds in all circumstances, and gives it whatever else He withholds. 28. *Ye have heard—you*, see vers.

and come *again* unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is  
 29 greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to  
 30 pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Here-  
 after I will not talk much with you; for the prince of this  
 31 world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world  
 may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me  
 commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

3. 18. *If ye loved me, ye would have rejoiced, because I go unto the Father: for the Father is greater than I* (omit *I said*). Recalling His mysterious words about going and returning, He invites their sympathy with Him in the joy awaiting Him. They should think less of their own bereavement, and more of His glory. As before, His going to the Father becomes the condition of an access of spiritual power to them (ver. 12), so the fact that He goes to the Father should occasion them real joy if they have His interests at heart. And He has no interests but what are theirs. It was no abrupt and painful and dark termination of life to Him. He was going home to the Father, and, as He said, their best interests were bound up with this. *The Father is greater than I.* Such a statement, if Christ were no more than human, would be superfluous. The disciples did not need to be told that God was greater than any man, however distinguished and holy. The inference is that the state to which the Lord was to be raised after His departure implied a conspicuous glory and power, such as was withheld on earth. The Son, as Son, is subordinated to the Father. Comp. with x. 29, 30. 29. *And now—believe*; cp. xiii. 19. Jesus alludes to the proofs which will be afforded them presently, that He is exalted to the right hand of power, and is all He has claimed to be; if the departure try their faith for the moment, the subsequent events will make it stronger than ever, all the more that He foretold the fact. 30. *I will no more speak much with you.* The announcement of His death being one of the proofs of His veracity and trustworthiness. *The prince of the world cometh*, see xii. 31. An ominous hint as to the personal assaults, though through earthly instruments, in appalling form, of the devil; cp. Luke xxii. 53, "This is your hour and the power of darkness." *And he hath nothing in me.* Though in the world of which Satan is prince, Jesus claims to be entirely independent of His jurisdiction; the prince of darkness has nothing he can call his own property, nothing kindred in Christ. For He was light, and in Him was no darkness at all. No man can make the same claim. The confession of sin implies that the god of this world has "something" in us. As in viii. 29, 46, Christ asserts His consciousness of sinlessness, 2 Cor. v. 21; 1 Pet. ii. 22; 1 John iii. 5; Heb. iv. 15. 31. *But that the world may know—so I do.* Jesus submits, and freely, to the devil's assault, in order that the world may recognise His love and obedience to the Father, who has sent Him with the express purpose of destroying the works of the devil,—a mission demanding self-sacrifice, humiliation, and shame, and that He who knew no sin should be made sin; apparently wholly the devil's, Gal. iii. 13. *Arise, let us go hence.* A minute recollection, and possible only for one who had heard the words spoken. It is doubtful if the movement was really made, see xviii. 1. It is impossible that the prayer (xvii.) was offered on the streets. The general

## CHAP. XV. I. I am the true vine, and my Father is the husband-

view is that the company rose, but did not quit the room. (It is too constrained and artificial to connect this clause with the first clause—"Arise, etc., that the world," etc. Let us leave in order to meet the prince of the world. There may be room for doubt whether the previous part of the verse is to be taken as above, or whether the "so I do" refers to the "as the Father gave me commandment,"—and to that alone, in which case the words "but that" are elliptical; and we must supply "but—I submit freely to His assault, in order that the world," etc.)

CH. XV. There are three leading themes in this chapter. (1) The relation of the disciples to their Lord; (2) Their relation to one another; and (3) Their relation to the world.

I. The disciples' relation to their Lord, vers. I-II. One common life: a union vital, organic, persistent; as members in a body, branches in a tree. Christ illustrates by the allegory of the vine and its branches: He is Himself the vine; His Father the husbandman who tends it; His disciples the branches. The *object* of the branch being to bear fruit, the fruitless are taken away, and the fruitful pruned to yield still more. The pruning *instrument* is Christ's word. The *condition* of fruit-bearing is being and abiding in Him. The *doom* of those not abiding in Him is to be thrown out of His fellowship and cast into the fire. The *privileges* of those abiding in Him are: to have their requests granted; to minister to the glory of God through bearing much fruit, and so proving their discipleship; and to have the assurance of their Lord's love as He has that of His Father. They abide in His love by obedience, as He in His Father's by obedience. The crowning result of the whole to them is joy, their Lord's own, and full. I. *I am the true vine.* The word *true* is that which expresses the absolutely and ideally true in distinction from all that is—not false—but falling short of the perfect idea which is symbolized, or shadowed forth, or attempted somehow to be expressed. What the vine, *e.g.*, is in the natural, Jesus is in the spiritual world. We may believe further that the vine is *intended* to be a type of truth in the spiritual, as all objects of nature indeed must be. And, again, Israel having been chosen by God to be a vine (Ps. lxxx., Isa. v., Hos. x.) among the nations, bearing fruit—the true fruit of the earth, excellent and comely—to His glory; and having become the degenerate plant of a strange vine, bringing forth fruit to itself, Jesus came, and of Israel indeed, to be all that Israel was meant to be, but failed. Jesus is the hope of Israel and at the same time the true Son of Man, the one man through whom the Great Husbandman receives the fruit for which He created the human family. Only in alliance with Him; only as penetrated by His Spirit; can there be permanence for anything human, or praise or use to God. The real humanity of Christ at least is involved in the title *Vine*: something over and above humanity in the *true* vine: something no man ever yet was. Probably the reason for the choice of the vine to set forth His relation to His disciples is deeper than an accident. The truths implied would, no doubt, be suggested by any other fruit-tree; yet the excellence and value of the particular fruit, the pains needful for its proper maturity, its universal culture in the East, the frequent reference to it in the pages of Old Testament Scripture, especially the figurative reference of Ps. lxxx. and other passages, make the choice almost imperative (cp. "I will henceforth no more drink," etc.). And my Father is the husbandman; cp. Isa. xxvii. 2, 3. A relationship of possession

- 2 man. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that  
3 it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the

and care on the one side, and of dependence and submission on the other, the vine being such as the husbandman makes it: the relationship Jesus delighted continually to emphasize. In claiming to be all in all to His disciples, He was careful to show that His Father was all in all to Him. The image here is simply the illustration of the truth in xiv. 20, "At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you." 2. The object of the branch is to bear fruit, a vine being utterly profitless for any other object; see Ezek. xv. What *fruit* is, see Gal. v. 22. It is the entire and various outcome of the Christian life; Christian character, conduct, service; active and passive virtues; a consecrated manhood; body, soul, and spirit possessed and penetrated by the Spirit of God. It is the life of Christ conveyed into us by His Spirit, and, like the distilling of the sap into grapes in the tree, transmuted into individual gift and grace, individual character for Christ. *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh it away.* It defeats the sole end of the vine and of the husbandman's labour. Can one be *in Christ* yet remain fruitless? Can one be in Christ and fall irrecoverably from grace? Perhaps minor points ought not to be pressed in allegories and parables. This at least is certain, that as the fruitless branch can have no living connection with the vine, no more can the fruitless professing Christian with Christ. Something is as it should not be; though man's eye may not detect the cause, the union is not the same kind of union as that of the fruitful branch or Christian. How, and when, the husbandman takes the fruitless branch away is left unmentioned: there is not one definite way or time, the process may be gradual; there is something ominous in the bare statement, and it will be borne in mind that *fruitfulness* itself is not impossible to be counterfeited. Of some who seem to be in Christ's fellowship and yielding the proofs, it is always true that they do not share His life. As of some who shrink from professing that they are in His fellowship, it is equally true that their life seems to make the claim. The day will declare. *And every branch—fruit. Purgeth* or cleanseth: as the vinedresser lops off superfluous leaves that the sap may not be wasted, but distil into grapes. It is implied that in the most advanced Christian there is always something of sin, always room for still further advance, Phil. iii.; that the Great Husbandman exercises a constant vigilant care over the Christian's growth, combining love with severity; and that it is the aim of the Christian to be submissive and to reach forth to the things which are before. The aim of the Christian is the *best*, not merely the *good*. The instrument of cleansing is mainly and essentially the *word*, ver. 3. But as all things work together for good to him who loves God, they must serve his increasing worth to God; and then the privileges which are loosening or making apparent the nominal connection of the fruitless branch are those which bind the fruitful more closely to the vine. The most faithful of God's servants have not unfrequently been the most severely tried. The fruitless may be the least distressed; they are simply at the right time "taken away." Life may have few crosses for them. 3. *Already ye are clean on account of the word which I have spoken unto you.* An encouragement that they might not fear the fate of their lost brother, or be suspicious of each other. Christ's constant training of them by His teaching had now reached its end, which was twofold—to instruct and to sanctify. How His word had

4 word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without

6 me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and searched out all their moral and mental imperfectness, raised them out of carnal views and hopes, set before them a great ideal of character, and disclosed the secret things of God and His kingdom, it is unnecessary to say, cp. xvii. 17. His word had been as a fan winnowing the chaff from the wheat, as a mirror revealing themselves and revealing God, Heb. iv. 12. The action of Christ's word, *i.e.* of the word which sets Christ forth, on the hearer is either purifying or hardening; for the former, faith is indispensable, xii. 47 f. 4. *Abide in me, and I in you.* To bear fruit the disciple must abide in Christ. The life of the disciple is *derived from*, and *dependent on*, the life of the Lord. There is a consenting co-operation of life with life, spirit with spirit. The union is the closest conceivable; the branch growing out of the vine, the Christian as if growing out of Christ by his faith, and the Spirit being the continual communication flowing from Christ into the disciple: source of life, growth, strength, purity, hope; all things. We need and can have no interposing medium besides, neither church nor priest. The vine abides in the branch through its life-giving sap, and the branch abides in the vine by its organic growth. There is a mutual inbeing. And in the same way, if we are to make a difference between our abiding in Christ and Christ abiding in us, the former may mean our cleaving to Him in faith and by prayer for personal acceptance with God and the grace needful for the spiritual life; the latter, Christ's personal indwelling in us through His Spirit; spring of all spiritual comfort, assurance, power, as if the response to our faith; see ver. 7 and vi. 56. No doubt the more we endeavour to abide in Christ the more are we sure that He abides in us. The parable fails just here, as the spiritual life and growth in the disciple are not the spontaneous outcome of Christ; the branch here must graft itself on to the stem by willing, believing surrender up of its own natural life, and desire to have no life but Christ's. [There may be a mystic sense in which all humanity—all individual men who have ever lived or shall live—can be spoken of as so many branches in Christ as the Creator, Lifegiver, First-begotten of every creature, and sharing in His life, i. 4.] *As the branch—me.* The branch is indebted to the vine's vitality for its existence, and for its continued fruitfulness as well. No fruit and no life without an anxious, careful cleaving to Christ. 5. *I am the vine, ye the branches.* Reminding them of their position of absolute dependence on Him. They are simply what He makes them. *He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for apart from me ye can do nothing.* What is put negatively in ver. 4 is here put positively and encouragingly. To abide in Him so that He abides in us is the sure condition of fruit-bearing, and of much fruit-bearing. *Apart from me*; cp. i. 3. The branch has no vitality in itself; no power of retaining vitality or fruitfulness severed from the vine. The life of the Christian is simply Christ's life reflected through him; cp. Gal. ii. 20; Col. iii. 3. Spiritual work must be done, if to be truly successful, in this dependent spirit. 6. *If a man—burned* (lit. *and they burn*). The

7 cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, 8 and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. 9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue 10 ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments,

vineyard fires burning up the pruned branches may have been visible from the room where they still were, giving point to the words. Remark that this doom is the penalty of not abiding in Christ, the order of thought being this: The branch exists to bear fruit; it bears fruit by abiding in the vine; it is impossible to bear fruit otherwise; fruit, much fruit, is *certain* as result of abiding; not to abide is to be fit only for the fire; to abide is to qualify for unspeakable privilege with God. As to the ominous suggestion in the fire consuming the fruitless branches, cp. Mark ix. 43 ff. and Rev. xx. 15, xxi. 8.

7. *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you.* Instead of saying as before, "and I abide in you," Christ substitutes this thought, which puts it perhaps more practically. To cherish all they had learned of Him would enable them to abide in Him; and while pondering on His word, it would be to them as if they were holding true communion with Himself and He were actually abiding within them, for His word is spirit and life. The thought, besides, is useful as a guard against any ecstatic representation of Christ, any mystic fancy. What we know of Christ is gathered from the word, and only so. *Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you* (R.V. *Ask what ye will*, etc.), xiv. 13 f. The first privilege of union and communion with Christ. But to those abiding in Him the burden of their earnest prayers must be, that that union may be still closer, truer, more fruitful. If their responsibility as bearing fruit is great, their privilege in asking grace for it is also great. 8. *Herein is [was] my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be [become] my disciples* (or —*fruit, and be my disciples*). The former making the Father's glory depend on the fruit brought forth alone; the latter co-ordinating the fact of discipleship with that of fruit-bearing. The former is perhaps the likelier reading. And in the word "become" we detect the growth of the disciple in faith and fruitfulness. The fact of their discipleship will be set forth beyond all doubt as they bear much fruit and glorify the Father, the glorifying of the Father being the crown of all done either by their Master or by themselves, xii. 28, xvii. 1. Jesus thus returns to the starting-point — "My Father is the husbandman." All the fruit of the vine and branches is to the praise of His glory, who planted and tended it with the assiduity of love. 9. *As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you: abide ye in my love.* The comparison would console them; showing both the *fact* that He loved them, and the remarkable *degree* to which He loved them. All relations and conditions of discipleship are reduced to this: *Love*. The Father is the great spring of love; the Son, the ever-flowing stream; the Spirit, the well of living water, thence derived, in each believer. To abide in His love is to abide in Himself; the change of expression, like the former in ver. 7, contributing to the clearness of the general conception of abiding in Christ. "My love" is, in the sense and assurance of it, Christ's love to them. The depth of that love is inexhaustible. The reality of it is guaranteed, as all Christ's love to them is a reflection of the Father's love to

11 and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be 12 full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, 13 as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, 14 that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my 15 friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

Him. How to abide in it is presently told. 10. *If ye keep—love.* As Christ proved His love to the Father by obedience to His commandments, the disciples prove their love to their Lord by obedience to His commandments, as before, xiv. 15 and 21. Jesus spoke here as man. Love and obedience act and react. The sense of Christ's love to us awakens love to Christ in us, and love once awakened proves its reality in obeying the will of the glorious object loved. Out of obedience and love springs joy, the crown of the whole. 11. *These things—fulfilled (full).* What was Christ's joy? The joy of having the Father's love, and of knowing that the Father loved Him, the joy of doing the Father's will, the joy of self-sacrifice, the joy of labour and suffering for men, and the joy of the harvest of faith, love, and hope. It is to be a joy *within them*, iv. 14: free, independent of all circumstances and conditions except God and His love, and enduring as God. *Fulfilled.* The disciples had a hope which was born of their Lord's teaching and work, a hope which had to be purged of much which was carnal; but yet, being fixed on Jesus Himself in affection and faith and loyal adherence to the close, it was a hope justified by all that had gone before in communion with Him; and should be fulfilled in joy beyond their best expectations. Jesus cannot disappoint our just hopes, since He Himself inspired them.

2. The relation of the disciples to one another, vers. 12-17. It is summed up in love,—a love like their Master's to them. 12. Jesus singles out one specific commandment, which He calls pre-eminently *His own*, obedience to which would carry universal obedience with it. *This is—you*, xiii. 34, 35. 13. *Greater love—friends*, x. 11, 17. Love can no more than yield up life. *Friends*; see on xiii. 34. Jesus died for us "while we were yet sinners." There is no doctrinal restriction to be thought of in the term *friends*. The point is simply, to what extent love will go for its object, 1 Cor. xiii.; 1 John iii. 16. 14. *Ye are my friends, if ye do what I command you*; making application of the general principle. The idea of friendship is too important to be at once dismissed, and the disciples are assured that they stand in this dear and privileged relation to Jesus, and are warned of the condition of retaining it. Their devotion to one another will prove their devotion to Him. Mark the emphasis on the pronouns. 15. *Henceforth—you*. He has treated them, not as servants, but as friends, admitting them into the fullest confidence of His Father and Himself; cp. viii. 34-36 on the analogous distinction between a *servant* and a *son*. A servant's duty is to obey his master's commands; he does not share his master's counsels. The disciples are required not only to keep Christ's commands, but to abide in His love, ver. 10. *All things which I heard from my Father*, etc., vii. 38, xiv. 10, 24, xvi. 15, xvii. 26. That God *was* their Father in Jesus was the chief part

16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the  
 17 Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I  
 18 command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate  
 19 you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you. If ye

of these "all things." 16. *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you* [lit. *Not ye who chose me, but I who chose you*]. Though their obedience is indispensable for retaining Christ's friendship, they are reminded that it began with His own free choice of them. This would comfort them, as it does all Christ's true followers. *And ordained [appointed] you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you.* The appointment to the apostolic office implied assurance both of results from their work, and of permanent results; it implied also assurance that the necessary qualifications to carry it on would be granted, xiv. 13 f., and see ver. 7 of this chapter. The *success* and *perpetuity* of the work of the kingdom of God, as well as the *authority* under which it is carried on by apostles or less conspicuous workers, are hereby guaranteed. 17. *These things—another.* The nature of His command to love one another, the motive and sanction, being explained, give point to the repetition. We may paraphrase this section thus: My special command to you is to love one another, as I have loved you. No greater love can be than that which leads to sacrifice of life for friends. *You* are my friends if you do this which I command you; for servants I will not call you, the servant being outside his master's counsel; the proofs of my friendship are, that *you* I have taken into fullest confidence with the Father and myself, and that I have chosen you (not you me), and qualified you for your life-work. I repeat it, then, as my special command to you to love one another. If devotion to one another prove their devotion to Christ, this common devotion to Christ should be the strongest bond between them. The nearer they are to Christ, the nearer the Christian disciples are to each other. Love to each other springs from friendship with Him. He cannot more forcibly urge His command on them.

3. The disciples' relation to the world, vers. 18–27. If the world hate them, they only share their Master's fate, which a faithful servant has to expect. And the world's hate proves they do not belong to the world, but to Christ. Ignorance of God is at the root of it, an ignorance wilful and culpable, since Christ, by exceptional word and work, has revealed Him as the Father. Hence hatred of Him is hatred of the Father. But even here there is a verification of prophecy. Nevertheless, to the world that hates them they shall bear witness of Christ, when the Spirit of truth shall descend on them. 18. *If the world—you.* (*Ye know, or know ye,—uncertain which.*) *Hate* is a strong expression, yet not too strong to describe the undisguised radical sentiment and essence of unbelief. The carnal mind is enmity against God, and against all that belong to God, *in so far as* they do belong to God, 1 John iii. 13. Within the sphere of Christ's friendship and Christian discipleship alone love is realized in its true, eternal significance; without, however modified and relieved by temporary conditions, the ruling power and principle is hate. *Hath hated me.* That was plain enough, and would be plainer next day, when the cross, the everlasting monument of the

were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the  
20 world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.  
21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake,  
22 because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they

world's immemorial hate against God, should be raised up. *Before it hated you* (lit. *me first of you*), the same construction as in i. 15, 30, "He was before me." This hatred of God, and of man for God's sake, began its explicit manifestation in Cain; see viii. 44; 1 John iii. 12; the wave that rose then, gathering through the ages, till it reached its height, and broke in fury on the cross, and we are struggling in its broken waters. 19. *If ye were of the world, the world would love its own.* To be "of the world" is to belong to it in spirit and principles and aim, to be under the power of its prince, xiv. 40, to have the love of it in the heart, 1 John ii. 15 f., cp. viii. 23. The world's love to its own is a selfish thing. It loves whatever ministers to its comfort, flatters its pride, accords with its opinions, disguises its real condition from it. God's love alone is unselfish. *But because ye are—you.* They are not of the world now, because Christ has chosen them out of it. Once, therefore, they were of the world, as all are and must be, until the same Divine, gracious choice calls them out of its ungodly spell, and the Holy Spirit enables them to respond to the call. *Therefore, etc.* A Christian man is a standing reproach to the world—or ought to be. In proportion as the Spirit of the Father is in him, the spirit of the world is condemned. 20. *Remember the word—also, xiii. 16.* This adage Christ had used to enforce humility; He now uses it to encourage them to bear sufferings. The world's treatment of Him shall be their gauge. It is a world that put Him to death, yet it is a world for which He died. There must be persecution in it, yet it is the object of hope. 21. *But—me, xvi. 3.* The disciple is hated because he is a disciple; the Spirit of Christ and of the Father, in so far as revealed in him, arouses the hate of the world. This has been the living principle in faithful men from the first, that which animated them and excited antagonism on the part of the ungodly. Thus Moses esteemed "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." As the disciple is hated for Christ's sake, Christ was hated for the sake of the God who sent Him. Ignorance of God was at the root of the whole; an ignorance, however, not intellectual but moral, as the fullest revelation possible of God had been made to them by Christ. 22–24. Ignorance might have been a conceivable plea, the mode of Christ's revelation being so different from what they had hoped for. What was not to be excused was their rejection of a person whose character and authority, as revealed in word and work, claimed the adoration and love of every honest heart. It was *goodness* that was hated in Christ, goodness aggressive, claiming to rule men in the name of the Father of goodness, and to make them the children of goodness. This was the God they did not know, and did not care to know. *If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin*, cp. ix. 41, vii. 46. Christ's manifesta-

23 have no cloak for their sin. He that hateth me, hateth my  
 24 Father also. If I had not done among them the works which  
 none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have  
 25 they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But *this*  
*cometh to pass*, that the word might be fulfilled that is written  
 26 in their law, They hated me without a cause. But when the  
 Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the  
 Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the  
 27 Father, he shall testify of me; and ye also shall bear witness,  
 because ye have been with me from the beginning.

tion and word were a touchstone, trying and revealing the heart. In His presence neutrality was impossible—men had to take their side. Not to be with Him was to be against Him; and not to be against Him was to be on His part. The sin was there before,—sin of undutifulness to God, cloaked under many specious disguises. The presence of Christ unmasked it. *But now they have no cloak [excuse or pretext] for their sin.* They could not say, e.g., We did not know that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. For they rejected Him solely because His word exposed them to themselves, laid bare their sins, and presented the claims of God in a form they would not recognise; see viii. 43 ff. Estrangement of affection is usually cloaked under ignorance. *He that hateth me hateth my Father also*; see viii. 42, xii. 45, xiv. 9. *If I had—Father.* Even the miracles, unparalleled in their history, might have suggested, *ought* to have suggested, the fact of a Divine mission. The collocation of word and work is similar to that in xiv. 10 f., and the argument is the same, *e converso*. 25. *But—cause.* The collected O.T. writings were called by the general title, the Law, as that portion was considered of chief importance. This quotation is from Ps. lxix. 4, “They that hate me without a cause,” etc. The various sorrows and sufferings of the servants of God in past times are all focussed in the Son; see remarks on xiii. 18. 26 f. Notwithstanding the world’s hatred, they must bear witness to it of Christ, and shall be qualified by Him to do so. *But—me.* Jesus assumes the power of sending the Comforter, as before He had said the Father would give or send Him at His own request and in His own name; so xvi. 7. By the mere juxtaposition of such texts the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is built up. Because the affirmation, *Which proceedeth from the Father*, is not also, in so many words, made with regard to the Son, the Eastern or Greek Church maintains a separate communion, protesting against the creed of the Western Church. The emphatic claim Jesus makes—*Whom I will send*—is an argument on the other side. The term *proceeding* is used by theologians as descriptive of the inner, essential, timeless relations of the Spirit to the Father and Son; as *begotten* is used of the Son towards the Father. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is begotten of the Father; the Spirit proceedeth from the Father and from the Son. The Lord Jesus makes the dependence of this new source of spiritual illumination on His Father as absolute as was His own. *To you.* The Holy Spirit was and is sent to the disciples of Christ. *He shall bear witness of me, and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.* The subject of the Spirit’s testimony is Jesus Christ, see xiv. 26, and the channel through which this testimony is given are the apostles themselves,

CHAP. XVI. 1. These things have I spoken unto you, that ye  
2 should not be offended. They shall put you out of the

who also have their own testimony to give; and their fitness for this great function is twofold: an outward one,—their fellowship with their Lord during His ministry; an inward one,—their endowment with the Holy Spirit. The testimony of the apostles to Christ is given in the Scriptures of the New Testament, which are a record of the words of men who were personally eye-witnesses of the facts they proclaimed, and were, besides, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in proclaiming them. The Spirit should reveal no new facts,—no facts at all that the apostles could be cognizant of in use of their faculties. The world should be indebted to the apostles for these facts, acquired in the ordinary way of observation and experience. Only the Spirit in them should guarantee for them, and all who receive their word, that these facts have been rightly apprehended and rightly presented to their fellow-men. A work of the Holy Spirit in the heart is necessary in order that the apostolic testimony may be received in faith; but we are dependent on the apostolic testimony so that the Spirit working in us must be tested by His accord with the Spirit speaking through their word. Apostolic testimony is unique, and cannot be added to. It is that of eye-witnesses, Luke i. 2. It is the only infallible source of appeal and judgment. Every Christian man is a witness for Christ. But the material of his testimony he must receive from the written word. Observe that the weightiest apostolic function is simply to bear witness to Christ, Luke xxiv. 48 f., i. 21 f.; Acts ii. 32, iii. 15, v. 32, especially x. 41, xiii. 31. According to Heb. ii. 4 (cp. Acts xiv. 3; Mark xvi. 20), the witness of the Holy Spirit was also given in the power to work miracles, in the gift of tongues, and the like. But the chief and permanent office of the Holy Spirit as witness to Christ, as we can easily gather from Christ's own statements in these chapters, was as Spirit of truth, to enlighten the mind in the truth, to confirm the apprehension of it, and so to be an inner source of wisdom, comfort, and power, 1 John v. 6, 8. Thus faith becomes its own evidence.

CH. XVI. (1) Jesus having told His disciples what they are to expect, they will not be offended. He specifies the nature of the persecutions to which they must be subjected, and the reason why He had not told them before, 1-4. (2) He must leave them, but His departure is for their good, because the Comforter will come to them, whose office with regard to the world and to the Church is then explained, 5-15. (3) Alluding to His departure and the coming of the Spirit in an enigmatical way, the disciples are perplexed, and Jesus assures them that they must experience sorrow, which, however, shall be presently converted into deep and abiding joy. Then all perplexity shall pass into fullest knowledge. Then He shall speak to them without a parable, and their relation to the Father shall be one of confidence and love, through faith in Himself. Adding a solemn and simple declaration of His Divine origin and destiny, His disciples respond with the earnest assurance that they understand and believe at last, and Jesus, accepting their faith, concludes by warning them that an hour of trial is at hand; they shall be scattered from Him, but the Father remains with Him. For them, peace and victory are guaranteed through Himself in a world of tribulation, 16-end.

(1.) 1-4. The disciples warned of persecutions for Christ's sake.  
1. *These things.* The hatred of which they should be the objects: *that ye should not be offended* [R.V. *made to stumble*], lit. *scandalized*.

- synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth  
 3 you will think that he doeth God service. And these things  
 will they do unto you, because they have not known the  
 4 Father, nor me. But these things have I told you, that, when  
 the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of  
 them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning,  
 5 because I was with you. But now I go my way to him that  
 sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?  
 6 But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath

see on vi. 61. Forewarned was forearmed. 2. They should be excommunicated and even put to death for Christ's sake. *Out of the synagogue*, see on ix. 22. *Whosoever killeth you shall think that he doeth [offereth] God service.* Fanaticism achieves a singular travesty of God's character in supposing that murder is an act as pleasing to God as an act of religious worship. Christ implies that persecution may spring from sincere motives. Religious zeal needs to be purified seven times of all personal elements. 3. *They have not known the Father nor me*; cp. xv. 21. There is a subdued irony in the thought that the men who take God under their special patronage by damning and killing or otherwise ostracising their fellow-men in His name, are displaying in the fact their absolute ignorance of Him—above all, their ignorance of the Father who sent His Son. It is ignorance of the love, pity, mercy, forbearance in the heart of God. 4. *Ye may remember that I told you of them*, see xiii. 19, xiv. 29. In the hour of trial the disciples should therefore, in the proof of their Master's omniscience, strengthen themselves by the thought of His loving and vigilant interest in them. The Christian course is ordained for each disciple, and through it all the remembrance of Christ's word guides and supports. *And these things I said not unto you from the beginning, because I was with you.* If they thought, Why did He not tell us all this before? Why allow us to leave home and work, and form hopes that He knew were false and must be given up?—the answer was, *I was with you.* Jesus was dispelling false hopes all the while. He was winnowing the sincere from the insincere followers, and impressing the disciples with the truth that those who adhered to Him must do so from love and loyalty to Himself solely, and must expect trials here in consequence. At the crisis of the ministry in Galilee, vi. 66 ff., the twelve stood by Jesus when they saw all worldly expectations vanish. That the disciples were sorrow-stricken and bewildered now, proved the tenacity with which they clung to mistaken views, not lack of openness on their Master's part. The contradiction implied in the warnings of an earlier date recorded in Matthew and Luke is apparent only. The chronological order in the Synoptists is questionable, and, besides, Jesus simply says here, *from the beginning.* There was a progressiveness in Christ's training of the twelve. It is clear that as they learned what their Lord was by daily fellowship, what would have been enough to stagger or repel at first, had it been known, would be as nothing compared with Christ's personal hold on their affections and reverence.

(2.) Vers. 5-15. *Jesus goes in order that the Comforter may come.* 5. *But now—Thou?* The disciples were doubtless silent through sorrow, and Jesus wishes to rouse them to take an interest in the events about to happen to

7 filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth ; It is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will  
8 send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment :  
9, 10 of sin, because they believe not on me ; of righteousness,

Himself and to them. Thomas had asked whither He was going, xiv. 5 ; but the thought of His departure was too painful to allow them to fix their minds on anything except the fact itself, and as it affected them. 6. *But—heart.* The reason of their silence. 7. *Nevertheless I tell you the truth.* You wish me to remain. *It is expedient for you that I go away. For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you : but if I depart [go], I will send Him unto you.* The gift of the Holy Spirit depended on Christ's ascension, on Christ's receiving Him as glorified man. The advantages of this exchange are—(1) the deeper knowledge of Christ ; (2) the thorough development of their own character, living by faith, having communion with an unseen Lord, attaining a self-dependence and inner spiritual maturity. What was implied in the Comforter's coming has been already stated (1) in xiv. 16, 17, where the facts, that He is the Father's gift at the Son's request, His permanent abode with them and in them, and their exclusive reception and knowledge of Him as the Spirit of truth, unrecognisable by the world as such, are insisted on ; (2) in xiv. 26, where His work as Teacher and Reminder to the disciples of all that their Lord said to them is asserted ; (3) in xv. 26, where He is spoken of as witness to Christ through the disciples. The last and fullest account of His office in the world and in the Church now follows. The expediency of Christ's departure can be gathered from all this great work of the Holy Spirit. Thus He is (1) Permanent Indweller ; (2) Teacher and Remembrancer ; (3) Witness ; (4) Guide into Truth, ver. 13 ff. 8–11. The Spirit's work on the world. 12–15. The Spirit's work on the Church. 8. *And when He is come, He will reprove [convict R.V., convince A.V. marg.] the world of [concerning] sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.* The world is men separated from the life of God, but not hopelessly so. To *convict*, to *convince*, to *reprove*, by any one of which the Greek verb may be translated (see iii. 20, viii. 46) ; to *convict* implying a judicial process, a trial held and proof of guilt furnished ; to *convince* implying an ethical process, a persuasion of the mind and heart ; to *reprove* implying a punitive act, the penalty of conviction, or the result of convincing. As we see from xv. 26 f., the Spirit effects His work through the apostolic word, and the commentary on this is the result of Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. *Sin, righteousness, judgment*, imply each other. Sin means absence of righteousness, and liability to judgment. Sin is the world's state as it is ; righteousness as it ought to be ; judgment as it must and shall be that righteousness may obtain. If there is no sin, there is also no righteousness, which is sin's measure ; and there can be no judgment, which is sin's penalty. 9. *Concerning sin, because they believe not on me.* Christ rejected and crucified by men reveals the essential nature and sinfulness of sin. Supreme Goodness and Love spending Himself for men was hated and slain, see xv. 23. It is not because of this or that gross or foul deed ; we could shift the burden of responsibility or lessen it with varying success ; probably often would not feel it. But the alienation of the

because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;  
 11 of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

heart from God is the root of all sin, and what that alienation means is seen in the cross. God put Himself into man's power, and man murdered Him. Sin uttered all its mind in the cross. Here, therefore, is the complete disclosure of the fact of sin and of the nature of sin. And all that is implied in yielding to our sinful passions, to temptations, to vices, to evil habits, to self-pleasing, through all the shades of culpability, is to be learned only at the cross. Unbelief in God revealed in Christ is the underlying root of all sin, and it is itself the proof and measure of sin's enormity. By holding up to the world Christ and Him crucified, the last utterance of sin, and the triumph of grace over sin, men are convicted of sin, Acts ii. 37. And no man can claim to be free from sin in such a light; from gross vices one may be free, his character be eminently moral, yet the test and standard of sin being the cross of Christ, the revelation of God's love and holiness there, every mouth is stopped, and all the world declared guilty before God.

10. *Concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye no more behold me.* Righteousness is a term not used in the Gospel elsewhere (in I John ii. 29, iii. 7, 10). In contrast to every other human life stands out that of the man Christ Jesus. His earthly life discloses the fact of righteousness and the character of it. He is "the righteous One," "Jesus Christ the righteous." The term righteousness means complete conformity to the Divine standard or law; and to convict of righteousness implies the fact that there is such a standard, and the ability to recognise its embodiment when seen. The character of Christ corresponds to the ideal of human nature which we all instinctively have; He is man as man ought to be; His life reflects perfect love and duty to God and man. Over all the generations of men He towers up the goal of every true aspiration. The world can never overtake Him and leave Him behind. His solitary form rises ever in the van of all true advance. To be like Him, to see Him as He is, to behold His glory, to be with Him where He is, are simple but profound ways of expressing the fact of Christ's fulfilment of every human ideal and hope. His going to the Father, *i.e.* His resurrection and ascension on their *ethical* side, proved that He was all this. He went to the Father as one who had achieved the right to go—in man's name, and claiming from the Father in man's name the reward of a righteous life, the acceptance and the place of a Son. The world becomes convinced, through the resurrection of Jesus, of the Divine recognition, and of its own lack of the righteousness which is in Him. The idea in *Ye behold me no more* is the same as is involved in the expediency of Christ's departure from the disciples. He is better comprehended when absent than when present, especially after the resurrection and gift of the Spirit proved Him to be what His life asserted He was. There has been but one Jesus Christ, and in Him we must find our own righteousness. The world's sin is its rejection of Christ. The world's righteousness is its acceptance of Him. *Concerning judgment, because the Prince of this world is [has been] judged,* see on xii. 31. Sense of sin leads to sense of the need of righteousness, and the sense of the certainty of judgment, for sin must be judged. The righteousness of Christ is sin's judgment. It shows that it ought not to be and must not be, and the cross shows it as the object of the Divine anger. In the death of Christ sin was judged openly, and the personal source of it Himself vanquished. That the Son of God must die for sin

12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear  
 13 them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come,  
he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of

reveals the imperative necessity for sin's penalty—death. But that He did die and rise again, the Prince of this world, having nothing in Him worthy of death, proves that His death was the bruising of Satan under His feet at the very height of his power. Sin must be judged, and its judgment is death, and judged even in the sinless Person of Christ, as the representative of sinful men; but this judgment is past for all who bring their sin to the cross to be condemned and abandoned, iii. 18, v. 24. The fact of the power of sin broken at its height inspires us with confidence and sure hope of victory. God will bruise Satan under our feet. In a sense the process of judgment goes on continually; good and evil are being sifted out of each other, as the word of Christ through the Spirit tells on men. The judgment of the cross, however, points forward to a future day of retribution, when the still unbelieving world shall meet its doom, when all things that offend shall be gathered out of the kingdom. "In this continuous threefold conviction of the Holy Spirit, we have a compendium of the history of the kingdom of God and of Christ" (Lücke).

12-15. *The Spirit's office in the Church.* 12. *I—now.* Possibly what Jesus had just said awakened signs of surprise and wonder and perplexed questioning; and He considers their weakness,—though longing to evoke intelligent sympathy. Besides—all that work in the world must be done through themselves as organs of the Spirit. It is necessary they should be assured as to their qualifications, though at the same time it is significant how directly the Lord speaks of the Spirit doing His own work in the world. The personality of the Spirit could be hardly more strikingly conveyed. They had hopes, plans, ideas, which were wrong and foolish; which the resurrection dispelled in great measure, and put them in the way of full understanding of the truth. Many things they had to find out, just as they went on their way of Christian life and Christian service. Their future work, sufferings, witness to the Lord, relations to the Jewish Church, and the like, as well as the deep meaning of His own appearing in flesh, His life, death, and resurrection, would unfold by degrees. Their inability arose partly from mental immaturity, partly from moral unfitness; they would not, till forced, abandon their prejudices. Truth is not always good or safe because of our infirmities. We could not bear now to know what the future holds in it; but the faithfulness of Christ is pledged to prepare us for the future, by the time it comes. He will let us know enough for the support of present faith. And it is the office of His Spirit to do this. 13. *But when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come.* Only in full possession of the whole truth was it possible for them to be the organs of the Spirit in such a work; and the Spirit would Himself possess them personally, being more than mere knowledge or love of truth; making the men themselves true men. *For He shall guide you into all the truth.* The word rendered "guide" occurs in Matt. xv. 14 and Luke vi. 39: "Can the blind lead the blind?" Acts viii. 31: "How can I, except some man guide me?" Rev. vii. 17: "The Lamb . . . shall lead them to living fountains of waters:" frequently in the Old Testament. The thought conveyed is a progress, gentle and gradual; a persuasion of the whole man; an absence of constraint, enlightening the mind and stimulating all the mental

- himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak :  
 14 and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me :  
 for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.  
 15 All things that the Father hath are mine : therefore said I,  
 that he shall take of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.

faculties, and cherishing true affections in the heart, without which the discovery of Divine things is dead or impossible. The Spirit of Truth is also the Holy Spirit. Step by step this Divine Guide leads the Church forward on its appointed path of profiting in the word of Christ revealed, and of service through the exercise of her manifold gifts. *All the truth*; cp. xiv. 26, "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you," and xv. 26, "He shall bear witness of me." Cp. also the equally broad assertions of John, 1st Epistle ii. 20, 27, and v. 20. Truth about Him who is the truth, explained and confirmed to us by the Spirit of Truth, must embrace *all things* in the long result. (i. 3, "All things were made by Him.") But the primary horizon of the knowledge of Christ as Saviour from sin is the most important of all, and God has in these last days spoken "His last word" unto us by His Son, Heb. i. 2. The Truth being Jesus Christ: the Guide, the Spirit. *For He shall not speak of [from] Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak.* An essential feature in One who is the Guide of men into truth, and guarantee of His faithfulness. Jesus asserted this of Himself, xiv. 10, viii. 26, 28, vii. 16-18, especially v. 30. The Father is the source of the Son's words: Father and Son, of the Spirit's. Thus the Trinity are bound together both in their inward and outward relations. The work of the Spirit is the unfolding of the significance of the work of the Son. The work of the Son was the manifesting the name of the Father. Those who are the organs—the mouthpieces—of the Spirit, through whom alone in fact the Spirit can "speak," exhibit this trait,—the gospel being a message from God; and each Christian apostle, or minister, speaks of the message as brought home directly to him, through the Spirit, always remembering that apostolic testimony is the source from which he must draw his message. *And He shall show [declare] you things to come.* Past, present, and future; the Christian's relations to all these are determined by Christ, and the Spirit interprets them. He recalls Christ and expounds Him: He guides into the present, necessary knowledge or action; He reveals the future. It is a promise in fact that the Church of Christ shall control the future; that no coming event shall disconcert it, or dislodge it from its true place in the history of the world; that the Church shall be ever abreast of the age,—presenting Christ to the age in the special form suitable to its needs and tendencies. 14. *He shall glorify me.* The Son glorifies the Father; the Father glorifies the Son; the Spirit glorifies the Son; and the Father glorifies His own name, xii. 28, 29, xvii. 1, 4. *For He shall receive [take] of mine, and show [declare] it unto you,* xiv. 26, xv. 26. 15. *All things that the Father hath are mine*; see iii. 35, v. 20, xvii. 2. *Therefore said I, that He shall receive [take] of mine, and shall shew [declare] it unto you.* The solicitude of Christ never even to appear independent of His Father is a striking feature of this Gospel; and when claiming universal empire, He acknowledges it as the Father's gift. The testimony of Christ regarding Himself is at once of the most exalted and most humble description. The Father has Himself nothing to give or tell, to do or purpose,

- 16 A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again a little while, and ye shall see me; because I go to the Father.  
 17 Then said *some* of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and,  
 18 Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.  
 19 Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again a little  
 20 while, and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned

which is not through the Son. And for us, all centres in Him. Without Him we have no Father, and none of the Father's things. These blessings wrought by the Spirit apply both to the Church and to each believing soul. The Spirit glorifies the Son in the hearts of all Christian men.

(3.) 16-end. 16. *A little while, and ye shall no more behold me: and again a little while, and ye shall see me*, xiv. 19. The A.V. ignores the change of the Greek verb (recognised by R.V.) which is retained in vers. 17 and 19. The vision of anxious inquiry shall pass into the vision of satisfied intelligence and love. (The last clause in A.V., *because I go to the Father*, ought to be omitted, the insertion being suggested by ver. 17.) 17, 18. *Then said—saith.* Jesus, apparently, pausing in His discourse, the disciples—some of them—repeat His last enigmatical words to one another in a subdued whisper; they ask each other what He means, and would fain ask Himself; but after the three questions already addressed to Him, they shrink. They add His previous statement of xiv. 12, 28, and ver. 5, *Because I go to the Father*, in itself intelligible, but unintelligible in the light of the words just uttered. The perplexity is photographed in the repetition of these verses. Jesus knew their desire to ask Him an explanation, and He resumes His discourse. His answer assures them—(1) that though they must experience sorrow, it will have the fruit of abiding joy; (2) that present doubt shall vanish into full knowledge; pledged in the facts—(1) that they shall obtain from the Father whatever they ask in His name; and (2) that He, their Lord, shall speak to them no longer in parables, but in plain words about the Father; and then (3) that their access to the Father and fellowship with Him through Christ's name shall be perfectly free, and shall rest in the sense of the Father's love to them, who have loved and believed in His Son. 19-27. 19. *Now—me.* Christ's knowledge or perception of their perplexity and wish to question Him need not have been supernatural. Their desire would be written in their faces. Still, He knew what was in man, and *knows* His disciples' thoughts and fears. 20-22. Present sorrow was inevitable because He left them; but it was the sorrow which should have fruit in joy, when He returned to them. 20. *Verily, verily—joy.* The utter prostration and agony of the disciples after the betrayal, condemnation, crucifixion, and death of their Master, He strikingly foretells in using three different words expressive of great grief. Christ says that the occasion of grief to them will

21 into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come : but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that  
 22 a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow ; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice,  
 23 and your joy no man taketh from you. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give *it* you.  
 24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name : ask, and ye  
 25 shall receive, that your joy may be full. These things have

be that of joy to the unbelieving world. He does not say that their joy will be grief to the world. *Your sorrow shall be turned into joy* : shall not merely pass away, but shall bear joy in its hand as the harvest of which it is the seed. 21. *A woman—world.* The discipline of pain can be borne with courage when it is recognised as the appointed means of bearing fruit. Resultless pain is unmitigated sorrow, Isa. xxvi. 18. 22. *And ye—you.* As the disciples' sorrow is the result of their Master's departure, so their joy is the result of His return ; uninterrupted fellowship with Christ being the spring of Christian joy evermore. Christ's return in the Spirit is intended, of course ; and yet there may be allusion to His self-manifestations after the resurrection and before the ascension. The comfort given in xiv. 18 f. and ver. 16 is that the disciples shall see their Lord again ; but here He says, *I will see you again* ; which, however, would be no comfort unless it carried with it the assurance of the other. Fellowship resumed—that is the meaning ; and thence a deep inner joy—*your heart shall rejoice* (Isa. lxvi. 14) ; a joy of which none can rob them, as none can rob them of the presence of their Lord. In xv. 11 the promise of sharing Christ's joy—a full joy—is conditioned on their keeping His commandments and abiding in His and the Father's love.

23-25. Doubt and perplexity shall disappear into the satisfaction of full knowledge, arising from a power with the Father in prayer through Christ's name, practically limitless, and from an altered method of teaching by their Master ; a change from dark passages to simplicity of speech. 23. *And in that day ye shall ask [interrogate] me nothing.* The need for putting questions such as those put in the upper room shall be done away in the full light of knowledge and persuasion of the Holy Spirit. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, if ye shall [ask] pray for anything from the Father, He will give it you in my name.* The change of word is to be noticed ; as in xiv. 13 and 16, which see. Prayer is something different from putting questions. The latter proceeds from ignorance, or perplexity, or unbelief ; the former, from faith and knowledge ; see on xiv. 13 f., where Christ promises to do for them what He ascribes here to the Father. The passages prove the equality of the Son with the Father. Such access to the Father in prayer—in Christ's name—implies an understanding of all that the name of Christ means, and believing dependence on its power. There will be no more need for asking a disclosure of the Father ; see xv. 7. The idea of such unrestricted communion with the Father through the Son is the dominant one. 24. *Hitherto—full.* Ignorant of all that the name of their Master signified, they could not urge it with God as a plea in prayer as

I spoken unto you in proverbs : but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you  
26 plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in my name :  
and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you ;  
27 for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved

yet. Now it was dawning on them in all its Divine mediatorial fullness. *Full*, or rather *fulfilled*, as in xv. 11. Their joy at the return of their Lord should be made *complete* in the consciousness of such access to, and power with, the Father through His name. The connection of ideas in xv. 7-11 is similar. The joy of intelligent faith in Jesus deepens into the joy of abiding fruitful union in the Father and in the Son, xvii. 11. 25. The second reason why perplexity shall disappear. *These things I have spoken to you in proverbs* [*parables*, margin of A.V. and R.V. : *dark sayings*, American revision, so ver. 29]. The word implies, obviously, a certain measure of obscurity. The *things* must refer to the foregoing discourse. *The hour cometh—Father*. The death and resurrection of Christ in the hands of the Holy Spirit threw a new and unquenchable light on all their Lord was—to them and to the Father, and on all the Father was through their Lord to them. This is the teaching all Christians enjoy.

26, 27. Their relations to the Father shall be such as to assure them of His readiness to hear their prayer in Christ's name ; that they are truly the objects of the Father's love,—being the loving and faithful disciples of Christ. 26. *At that day ye shall [ask] pray in my name : and I say not unto you, that I will ask the Father for you*. The difference in the Greek verbs for “asking”—the former word of an inferior to a superior, the latter of an equal to an equal (or for simple interrogation), is the difference between man and God. In xiv. 16 Jesus says, “I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter,” etc. It is on the supposition that the disciples are in the enjoyment of the Spirit's presence, indwelling, and teaching through Christ's own intercession, that He now seems to contradict Himself. The state of pupilage will be gone. Not an outward Christ—a Christ after the flesh (2 Cor. v. 16), but an inward, spiritually present Christ, is the Christian's recourse and strength ; and prayer is the great means of converse with Him. The prominence given to *prayer* throughout the whole passage, as proof of Christian maturity, as well as substitute for outward means of instruction and support, is significant. Comparing the three passages referring to prayer in xiv., xv., xvi., we may classify them so—(1) Prayer the proof of Christ's Almighty influence with the Father, xiv. 13 f. (2) Prayer the proof of the disciple's living fellowship with his Lord, xv. 7, 16. (3) Prayer the proof of the disciple's spiritual maturity ; of his access with confidence as a child to the Father, xvi. 23 ff. 27. *For—God*. R.V. substitutes in the last clause, *that I came forth from the Father*, in place of, *from God*. Access to the Father in prayer with confidence in the name of Christ is grounded on the Father's own love to them ; and the assurance that the Father loves them is reflected in their own love to their Lord, and faith in Him ; for as their love to Christ has been awakened by His love to them, His love to them is the reflection of the love of the Father from whom He came, xv. 9. In xiv. 23 the assurance of the Father's love is bound up with the disciple's love of Christ, and obedience to His word. How much is intended in their faith that the Lord had “come forth from the Father,”—

28 me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world : again, I  
 29 leave the world, and go to the Father. His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no  
 30 proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee : by this we believe

special prophetic mission, pre-existence, Divine rank,—must be left undetermined ; see below, ver. 30 f. Jesus knew and interpreted rightly their feelings of love and faith to Himself, as He always can do. The term for love is that used exclusively of the affection of natural relationship, and nowhere else applied to the mutual love of God and man ; see on xi. 5. This is the only place in these five chapters where the word is used, *agapan* being used twenty-four times, and ten times in the rest of the Gospel.

28–33. Jesus declaring with solemn and simple emphasis His Divine origin and destiny, **the disciples at last express their absolute faith in Him**; and Jesus, accepting their faith, warns them nevertheless that it will be immediately put to a severe strain. He will be forsaken by all but God. Then He assures them of peace in Himself, though tribulation awaits them in the world.

28. *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world*, see on viii. 42. Uniqueness of origin in the Father, pre-existence with the Father ; a coming into this world, not as that of all, but as of One who had a conscious personal existence before, and who came into this world through the exercise of His own will. *Again, I leave the world, and go to the Father*. Uniqueness of origin carries uniqueness of destiny. Coming into the world as none ever came, He leaves it as none ever left it—by His own will—in order to go to the Father, from whom He came, xiv. 12, 28, and ver. 5. This simple statement sums up together the eternal generation, the incarnation, the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Son of God.

29. *His disciples—proverb*. Jesus had said as much and as plainly before, but probably the assurance of such access to the Father, and of the Father's love to themselves, especially His own encouraging view of their faith in Himself, led them up to this point at which the truth seems to burst on their view. They were not yet at the top of the hill. The dark valley of Christ's cross lay between this point and that.

30. *Now we are sure [we know] that Thou knowest all things, and needest not—God*. The certainty born in the disciples, dispensing with the need for putting any further questions, that their Master was Omniscient and Divine in origin, which meant Divine in nature and personal existence, was the result of all that they had heard from His lips in that upper room ; His own calm reiterated testimony to Himself, with the light of His past character, as they knew it, intensified now through the fear of being deprived of the unparalleled privilege. To express faith in Him as having come forth from God must be taken together with the ascription to Him of omniscience, an attribute of Godhead only. We perceive this, but whether the disciples perceived the logical sequence, as we can, may be doubted ; they may have said more than they knew, and yet that this confession was intended to be the very fullest possible—Messianic in fact—conveying their belief in Jesus as holding an exceptional relation to the Father, endowed

- 31 that thou camest forth from God. Jesus answered them, Do  
 32 ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now  
 come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and  
 shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the  
 33 Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you,  
 that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall  
 have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome  
 the world.

with Divine attributes, and in the world for an exceptional purpose, cannot reasonably be doubted. It is not necessary, therefore, to put the question whether by the words, *camest forth from God*, the disciples meant all that their Lord meant. (It is striking that all the three Greek prepositions, meaning "out of" or "from," are employed here; that denoting the closest connection in ver. 28, as in viii. 42, that denoting a more distant relation in ver. 27, and that denoting the most distant, used by the disciples, in ver. 30.)

31. *Jesus — believe?* Not incredulously; for He had already credited them with faith, ver. 27; rather with a sense of relief and joy that there is such a hearty response at last to this revelation, though not yet so complete in its hold over their own loyalty to Him as they imagined. One more experience, though a formidable one, was needful, and their faith would be perfected. He warns them of it. 32. *Behold—me* (Matt. xxvi. 31). The passive way of putting their desertion, *Ye shall be scattered*, softens the infidelity. Their faith in Him would sustain a shock, for which as yet it was too feeble. He should be forsaken of all, but the Father should be with Him. Observe the striking presential form, *I am not alone, the Father is with me*: not, "I shall not then be alone." He is never alone; the Father is ever with Him, John viii. 16, 29. (The Greek preposition for "with" denotes co-existence.) 33. *These things—world*. A summing up of the Christian disciple's experience here to the end of time. In Christ, peace; in the world, tribulation; through Christ's victory over the world, courage and hopefulness. On peace, see xiv. 27; on tribulation, see xv. 18 ff., and vers. 1-3. Jesus speaks of the world as already overcome; possibly a pledge of the victory He had felt to be the spontaneous confession of faith in Him by His disciples; cp. xii. 31, see 1 John v. 4, 5; Rev. iii. 21. The world conquered by our Lord must be conquered through the power of our faith in Him. How more fittingly could such unparalleled discourse be concluded than by this assurance of peace in Himself, and of triumph—triumph of His own over all the power of the enemy? The end goes back to the beginning, xiv. 1, "Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in ME;" and it affords the ultimate reason for dispelling fear, and possessing our souls in peace;—this that Jesus has overcome every cause for fear, both in this world and in the world to come.

CH. XVII. This prayer of Jesus is usually called His great high-priestly prayer, offered, like the sweet incense of the Jewish high priest before the Holiest was sprinkled with blood, as He was on the eve of laying His life down a sacrifice for men. Having elicited such an emphatic expression of faith (xvi. 30) from His disciples, Jesus perceives that His work in their

CHAP. XVII. 1. These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy  
 2 Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as

training is achieved; and He turns at once in prayer to His Father in the recognition of the arrival at last of the supreme crisis, and commits Himself and His disciples to the Father's love and care. It is the out-pouring of the Saviour's heart when it was fullest; as a dying parent having bestowed his blessing on his children commends them to God. And Jesus wishes His disciples to know for what He prays, that they may be taken into the inner confidence of His Father and Himself as to their future, and the future of His Church. The chapter contains, accordingly, His prayer *first* for Himself, 1-5, and *second* for His disciples, 6-end.

I. 1-5. Christ's prayer for Himself is to the effect that the Father should glorify Him now that He has performed the work for which the Father endowed Him with the requisite power, namely, revealing and imparting to men the life eternal, which consists in the knowledge of God and His Son. 1. *These words [things] spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said*—see xi. 41—*Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy [the, R.V.] Son may glorify Thee.* Christ's invariable address to God, except on the cross, was in the word "Father!" xii. 27 f., xi. 41; Luke x. 21; Matt. xi. 25. ("My Father," Matt. xxvi. 39, 42; "Abba, Father," Mark xiv. 36.) The whole revelation of the gospel of God's love is in the word and its use. Jesus dates the hour by the confession of faith on the part of the loyal disciples. All His training of them led up to this; and when it was reached, when Jesus felt that faith in Himself was really planted beyond fear of uprooting in their hearts, He perceived that there was now but the last thing to do, to lay His life down, which He does of Himself, as He perceives without outward warning that God's time for Him has come. *The hour is come!* see ii. 4. The hour fixed by God in which "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" should be offered up; the supreme hour of the world's history, the striking of which rang out the old and rang in the new; the hour to which all the previous dispensations were preparatory. Time measures all things, yet the measure of time itself is the unfolding of God's eternal purpose of grace for sinners. All that happens in time is under God's rule; but time itself happens in order that God's end in creation and redemption may be reached; and "time shall be no longer" when the mystery of God shall be finished, when this prayer of the Lord shall be fulfilled in the perfecting of His mystical body. Time is for purposes of salvation; the Lord Jesus Christ is the Beginning and the End. *Glorify Thy Son*, etc., see on vii. 39; cp. xi. 4, xii. 23, 28, xiii. 31 f., xiv. 13. The sense Jesus had of His Father's and His own glory as inseparable, and that the one depended on the other, is striking, Isa. liii. 10. He prays that He may now be glorified, but only that the Father's glory may be made conspicuous thereby; cp. viii. 50, 54. Only the glory that the Father could give Christ sought, and only such glory as would give greater glory to the Father. 2. *As Thou [gavest] hast given power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him.* [That all that which Thou

3 many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that  
 they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ,  
 4 whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth; I

*hast given Him, He should give to them eternal life.*] Comp. the similar words in vi. 37, 39. The prayer to be glorified is *in accordance with* the grant of universal authority made by the Father to the Son (iii. 35; Matt. xxviii. 18); and that grant has been made in order that the Son may impart life eternal to all that the Father has given Him. The natural consequence is that the Son be raised to the glory which will manifest that authority, and where He will exercise it, and so will enable Him to carry out the gracious purpose of the Divine gift. The Son, as man and mediator, was invested by the Father with universal authority, in order that He might be the source of endless life to all given Him by the Father. The two gifts are to be distinguished: the Son was ordained the spring and mediator of life to men (v. 26, "The Father hath given to the Son to have life in Himself"), and was clothed with the needful endowments by the Holy Spirit. *All flesh.* A very common O. T. phrase (Gen. vi. 12; Ps. lxxv. 2; Isa. xl. 5; Joel ii. 28), denoting mankind on their frail and mortal side. We must separate in thought the fact of this gift from the means which our Lord took in order to gain the only power over men which is worth possessing, that of winning their love and obedience by His sacrifice of Himself in life and death. The Father Himself could not give such a power apart from the means, but He could ordain the means, and so sustain His Son in going through with them, and so act in His invisible drawing on men's hearts, that the results foretold by Jesus should be verified, ch. xii. 32. The power of Christ over those whom His Father has given to Him is dependent on His power over all mankind. The gospel is not for a few, but for all. The appeal in it is universal. If it did not come with a message for all men, it would not come with an effectual call to any man. In giving life to those who were gifted to Him by the Father, Jesus therefore proves His power over humanity. Hence His "authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man." 3. *And this—Christ*; cp. 1 Cor. viii. 6. Definition of eternal life as knowledge of the one true God, and of Jesus Christ sent by Him. The mission of Jesus Christ reveals the nature of the one true God: the Sent—the Sender, the Son—the Father, 1 John v. 11. It is possible to see in the one clause a reference to the Old Testament, and in the other a reference to the New Testament. The two economies are mutually evidencing. The word *true* denotes that its object realizes the ideal. Life is in spiritual union and communion with God through Jesus Christ; but since knowledge is necessary for fellowship, the exchange of terms is natural; cp. Matt. xi. 27, and often in John, see x. 14, 15, viii. 55; 1 John iv. 7 ff. Life will be capable of infinite expansion as our knowledge of God deepens. (Considerable doubt is thrown on the genuineness of this verse as a portion of the actual prayer of our Lord. Some are satisfied with the omission simply of the last two words, *Jesus Christ*. The objection is that the words are too formal, too much like a familiar formula of Church confession, to have been uttered in prayer by Jesus at such a moment. The question is but a fringe of the wider one, — how far John has given us a literally and verbally correct account of his Lord's words; see Introduction.) 4 f. *I have glorified—the*

5 have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the 6 glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out

*world was.* I have glorified Thee, and now do *Thou* glorify me. *Upon the earth.* There remained more to do in heaven, ver. 1. *Having finished the work,* etc., see ix. 4, vi. 38, iv. 34. What that work essentially was, see ver. 6 ff., 26. Having received the foregoing confession of faith from His disciples (xvi. 29 f.), the Lord might well utter this confident assertion. *And now do Thou, Father, glorify me.* As no man besides could or can, Jesus presents His life on earth as an argument for receiving glory from the Father. No confession of error or sin or failure, no regret, no depreciation of Divine judgment escapes His lips. *With Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was,* ver. 1. Jesus prays for a return to the pre-existing condition of glory in fellowship with His Father. And He makes it evident that to be with His Father in the most intimate communion of life and glory, is His chief desire, see i. 12, and ver. 24. As in ver. 1 Jesus simply asks the Father to glorify Him, here He defines the character of the glory that is to be conferred.

2. 6-end. *Our Lord's prayer for His disciples.* In the *first* place He speaks of His work as revealing the Father to them, and of their response in faith, so as particularly to characterize His disciples, and differentiate them from the world besides, 6-10. In the *next* place He prays for them—(1) That they may be kept in the Father's name from the evil of the world in which they must live, 11-16. (2) That they may be sanctified in the truth, 17-19. (3) That they may all be one, 20-23. (4) That they may be with Himself where He is, and behold His glory, ver. 24. (5) Jesus concludes with a striking assertion of the world's ignorance, and of His own knowledge of God, and of His disciples' knowledge of God through Himself; with the resolution to make still further known to them the name of God, already disclosed, in order that they may share with Himself God's love, and have Jesus Himself personally dwelling within them, 25, 26. First, Jesus describes His disciples before He prays for them, 6-10. 6. *I have manifested—word*; cp. Ps. xxii. 22. The building up of a believing fellowship on earth, and arranging for its perpetuity, was the chief work of Christ, ver. 4. The manifestation of God's name may be said to be in part the condition of gathering disciples: the susceptible responded to the revelation; cp. ver. 2. On the other hand, to such responsive souls alone could this revelation, in its deepest reaches (xiii.-xvii.), be made. The *name* of God, an O. T. idiom (xii. 28, vers. 11 f., 26), stands for the whole nature and will of God as disclosed to men through the Son: the fulness of His grace and truth to sinners; see i. 18. *To the men whom Thou gavest me out of the world*; see vi. 37, 39. *Thine they were*; see on vi. 45, viii. 47. In what sense did the disciples belong to God before coming to Jesus? They were God-fearing men, Israelites indeed; listening to God's voice in conscience and Scripture, and longing for more of God in heart and mind: they were "of God;" "hearing and learning of the Father." So they "came to Christ." Whether this exhausts the conception of belonging to God, and how much is due to their choice of God and how much to God's choice of them determining their choice of Him, must be solved in the region of experi-

of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me;  
 7 and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that  
 all things, whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee:  
 8 for I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me;  
 and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I  
 came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst  
 9 send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but  
 for them which thou hast given me: for they are thine.  
 10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glori-

mental religion. *Thou gavest them me.* The attraction of the disciples to Jesus, and their acceptance of Him as Lord, He ascribes to the power of the Father upon them. They could not have been the Father's, therefore, without the same influence. If this applies to every believing man, the application must admit of the same inference, namely, that the believer belongs to the Father before He belongs to the Son, and is led by the Father to the Son when the Son manifests the Father to Him. There is in this reciprocal influence of Father and Son on the human heart (xiv. 23) a striking verification of the prayer: "Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." The Father gives and draws to the Son just as the Son in turn manifests the name of the Father, Matt. xi. 27. *And they have kept Thy word, i.e. the word or logos* (the whole Gospel), spoken in God's name by their Lord, ver. 8. Obedience followed faith. 7 f. *Now they have known (know)—me.* The word *now* is emphatic, and the allusion is to xvi. 30. *Now* we are sure (know), etc. *The words which Thou gavest me,* etc.; see xiv. 10. The "words" imply all the separate utterances of Christ as personal revelation of the character and will of God, convincing the believing receiver of them that Christ is Divine in origin and person, and His mission Divine. Deeper and assured knowledge and faith follow obedience. Observe the order in the description of the disciples: (1) they were the Father's, and given by Him to the Son; (2) obedient to His word; and (3) responsive to that word—believers in Christ's Divine origin and mission; a striking illustration of vii. 17. Christians can be regarded from each of these three great points of view: (1) as the Father's gift to the Son (it is evident how dear to the heart of Jesus such tokens of His Father's love were, vers. 2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24); (2) as men who obey the word of God; (3) as men who repose faith in their Divine Lord. 9 f. *I pray* (lit. *make request*) *for them.* The first pronoun is emphatic, and we may render the meaning thus: These men believe in me; and I, on my part, now pray for them: Christ's prayer for them being based on the fact of their faith and obedience. The utterance is sublime: the whole majesty of Godhead is centred in the first word *I*. *I pray not for the world*: not in the same sense, and not at present. (On the word *pray*, see on xiv. 16.) *For they are thine.* Jesus feels bound to care for such a valuable gift, and in a way proportioned to the love He has to the giver; see x. 28-30. *And all mine are thine—them.* While Jesus grounds His request for His disciples on the fact that they belong to His Father, He reminds Himself and His Father that all is common between them: and that as these disciples are a concern to Himself because they are His Father's gift to Him, His own glory through them will therefore be a concern to His Father. We have thus an additional

11 fied in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, 12 that they may be one, as we *are*. While I was with them in

characteristic of the disciples of Christ in these verses: on its *negative* side, they are not of the world; and on its *positive* side, they are on that account the instruments of glory to Christ in the world.

Second, the contents of the prayer for the disciples. (1.) 11-16. Let them be kept from the evil in the world. Returning to His Father He must leave His disciples in the world: may the Holy Father keep them in His own name. When with them, He had Himself kept them so that none but the son of perdition was lost—as Scripture had foretold. But now He goes to the Father; and He has made this request in order that those whom He leaves may not brood on their loss and sorrow, but share His own joy completely. Their reception of and obedience to His Father's word has brought on them the hatred of the world, to which they do not belong as He does not belong to it; still He does not ask that they be withdrawn from it—simply kept from its evil. 11. *And I am no more in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to Thee* (so R.V.). Christ's intense consciousness of oneness with the Father makes Him overleap the interval both of time and of woe still lying between Him and glory, but His heart yearns over His own. *Holy Father! Keep them whom Thou hast given me in Thy name, that they may be one, even as we are.* Holiness is the attribute of God most immediately concerned in the preservation of Christians from evil (cp. ver. 25, "Righteous Father"). The combination of ideas in this sublime title is impressive: holiness and love being both embraced. As the holy God, as the loving Father, Jesus appeals to Him to keep His people from the stain and destruction of sin. The absence of allusion to the presence of the Holy Spirit, the other Paraclete, is striking; perhaps almost a corroboration of the genuineness of the record. But it is understood that the answer to this request involves the gift of the Holy Spirit, who is sent in the name of Christ (xiv. 26). Having had the name of God manifested to them, and having yielded themselves up in faith and obedience to the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ revealed in the name (ver. 6), that name is named upon them. They are committed to all the truth it declares, and the holiness it enjoins, as they belong to Him whose name it is; and so the prayer follows: *Keep them in Thy name*; cp. Num. vi. 27; Deut. xxviii. 10; Ps. xx. 1. If we are obliged to adopt the reading of R.V.: *Keep them in Thy name which Thou hast given me*, maintained by most moderns (except Godet), the significance remains the same: the difference being simply in the ascription of the name of God to Christ. It is an unusual mode of expression, even taking into account such passages as Ex. xxiii. 21; Phil. ii. 9; Rev. iii. 12, xix. 12, and we cannot help feeling that the idea is incongruous with vers. 6 and 26. *That they may be one, as we.* Some plausibility is given to the last-mentioned reading by the interpretation, which seems natural: Let the unity of our name, Father and Son, be reflected in their unity. At all events, the preservation of believers in God's name has the object in view of binding them to one another, as sharers in the common blessing of identification with God and His dearest interests, so that their fellowship shall reflect that typical fellowship of Father and Son of which ver. 10 is an expression; see on ver. 20. 12. *While I was with them I kept them in Thy*

the world, I kept them in thy name : those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of  
 13 perdition ; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now  
 14 come I to thee : and these things I speak in the world, that  
 14 they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given  
 them thy word ; and the world hath hated them, because they  
 are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.  
 15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world,  
 16 but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are

*name which Thou hast given me, and I guarded them* (so R.V. The same emendation as in the previous verse, with less likelihood to show for it. Some who accept the former reject this). When speaking directly to the disciples, Jesus comforted them, xiv. 16 ff. When commending them to God, the pathos of their condition without His own personal presence apparently possesses His thoughts (Heb. iv. 15). The repetition of the same idea in more forcible fashion : "*I guarded them*," suggests the reality of the Christian's danger and of his Lord's vigilance. *And not one of them is [was] lost, but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled.* (The exception does not apply to those whom the Father had given to His Son. The construction in Greek is well known, cp. Matt. xii. 4, "Which it was not lawful for him to eat, or for those who were with him, but for the priests alone ;" so Luke iv. 25 f.) On "son of perdition," cp. 2 Thess. ii. 3 and Eph. ii. 2, "sons of disobedience" (Isa. lvii. 4), cp. Matt. viii. 12, "sons of the kingdom," see xii. 36. Perdition was as if his origin, and perdition his destiny. Judas Iscariot was bound and related to perdition as is the child to its parent. No one is a "son of light" by nature ; and no one is a "son of perdition" by nature (cp. viii. 38 ff.). We are all fallen sons by nature ; but to be a "son of perdition," a man must of his own will permit the principle of perdition to possess him, to become by habitual yielding to it his very nature ; and so he gravitates to his own place, for he bears it in him. In the destruction of Judas Scripture was verified ; and therefore there was involved the mystery of Divine fore-ordination, see on xiii. 18. 13. *But [And] now I come to Thee—themselves.* The audible committal of the disciples to the Father's care, combined with the assurance that their Lord Himself had gone to be with the Father (xiv. 12, 28), should cause their sorrow to disappear into the fulness of His own joy ; see on xv. 11. 14. *I have given—world.* Their reception of God's word proved them to be in sympathy with God's will of righteousness, and so they incurred the hate of the world, which "lieth in the wicked one" (ver. 6, and see on xv. 18 ff. and viii. 23). Treatment of God's word, i.e. of God as revealed in the word, determines whether we are of the world or of God. 15. *I pray not [I do not ask] that—evil [one].* The hate of the world is not to be shrunk from, but to be endured ; for not otherwise can testimony be borne to the power of Christ's all-conquering love, or the Christian discipline be complete. There is therefore an isolation from the common life of men which is as injurious to the Christian as it is to the world. No man could be less "of the world" than Jesus ; and no man was more habitually in the stream of its ordinary and varied incident. What is "evil" in the world must to a large extent be left to the individual conscience ; if we bear in mind that evil not

17 not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify  
18 them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast

merely exists, but is the subtle atmosphere penetrating every region of human life, and corroding where conscience is not wakeful. We cannot localize evil. And that is evil to one which to another is impotent. The ever-recurring problem to the earnest Christian is how to be in the world, and yet prove that he is not of it. It is probable that the concrete personality, and not the abstraction, is pointed to in the word "evil." Cp. xiv. 30; 1 John ii. 13 f., iii. 12, v. 18 f. 16. *They—world* (ver. 14). A repetition giving emphasis and solemnity to the conception.

(2.) Let them be sanctified in the truth, vv. 17-19. The second element in Christ's prayer for His disciples, and which may be taken as the positive side of the previous idea. For there is only one effectual method of being kept from evil in the world, namely, by the indwelling of God's Spirit in the heart to enlighten and purify. 17. *Sanctify them in the truth.* See on x. 36. R. V., by putting the alternative "consecrate" in the margin, suggests the radical notion of the word in Greek: a separation and setting apart to God's uses; see Lev. xxii. 2; Deut. xv. 19. The *consecration* is, speaking strictly, the result of *sanctification* begun at least, its outward proof; actually, in a spiritual dispensation, consecration must itself mean the devotion of the heart: a separation from the world in the affections and will. The work is God's, not apart, however, from man's free will, Ps. cxvi. 16. "Truth" is the instrument of sanctification, or rather the element in which that process takes place; and the truth is God's word: *Thy word is truth*, vers. 6 and 14; see viii. 32, 40 ff. *Truth*, absolutely, is that which satisfies the mind, the conscience, and the heart; and the reception of God disclosed in "the word of the truth of the gospel" of His Son, brings light to the mind, and repose to the affections, and peace to the conscience. The deep significance of such an expression "in the truth" is brought out by comparing it with other passages: "He that is of God heareth God's words," viii. 47. "He (the devil) abode not in the truth," *ib.* ver. 44. "I am the truth," xiv. 6. "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice," xviii. 37. "That we may know Him that is true; and we are in Him that is true," 1 John v. 20. Above all, we must compare what is said of the Holy Spirit as the "Spirit of truth" in the believer, xiv. 17, xv. 26, xvi. 13; 1 John ii. 20, 27. Opposed to the world's lie and error (1 John iv. 6), the Christian possesses truth, 1 John ii. 21; and this places an ever-widening separation between him and the spirit of the world. The word of God in His Son is the disclosure to man of eternal truth: truth as to his origin, position, destiny; as to his relationship to Himself—"the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent;" as to his relationship to his brother men; his place here; his hope for the future. There are implied, further, the absolute *finality* and *reliability* of this word of God in Christ. Of no word of man could this be affirmed. Into all human discoveries, into the highest reach of thought, error enters. Truth is won hardly by a laborious process, step by step, by supposition and by argument, by tentative and experimental work, by long suspense and doubt. It is not so with the word of God, on which as setting Christ forth, confirmed in our hearts by the Spirit, we rest for life eternal, and as God's word it is accessible to all men. It is "the truth" in the most absolute and unqualified sense. It makes us *true*, because *new* men. No grain of error or falsehood corrupts or weakens it. Hence the confidence which inspires the Christian, springing

sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into  
 19 the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they  
 20 also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for  
 these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me  
 21 through their word; that they all may be one; as thou,  
 Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one  
 in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

partly from assurance that he has the truth of God, and partly from the experience of its purifying power (1 John ii. 6, v. 13 and 19, 20), and without which he would not be qualified to do his work as an ambassador for Christ in the world. 18. *As—world.* The apostolic mission to the world followed their sanctification in the truth, and the apostles have the same right to speak in Christ's name as He in His Father's: they continue His work, and He is the personal source of all ministerial authority, the mission of the Son by the Father being the ground of the mission of the apostles by the Son. The connection between ver. 17 and ver. 18 is obvious. Christ's disciples bear His word as sanctified men to the world; see xv. 16 and xx. 21. 19. *And for their sakes—truth*; see on x. 36. The Father sanctifies the Son, and the Son sanctifies Himself. Between the Father and the disciples Jesus as it were interposes Himself, for the Father's consecration of the disciples can take place only as the result of the Son's consecration of Himself on their behalf: *i.e.* His free surrender of Himself over to the Father's will unto death—a surrender of Himself made in respect of sin. The consequence of believing reception of Christ is the placing of the believer first in an abiding *sanctified relation to God*, Acts xx. 32, xxvi. 18; 1 Cor. i. 2, etc.; see Heb. x. 8–10 and 29; and then as he stands in the truth the gradual, ethical process of inner purification follows. Christ's self-sanctification is accordingly in a higher plane than ours, as it is not the pattern alone, but also the effective power. "Christ realized the ideal of holiness in His life and suffering, and this is the ground for the sanctification of men" (Neander).

(3.) Let them all be one, vv. 20–23. 20. *Neither pray I for these alone [And not for these only do I ask], but for them also which shall [omit shall, R.V.] believe on me through their word.* In passing to the request for the unity of His disciples, the Lord fitly mentions that His prayer includes all the fellowship of the saints, not His apostles only. The apostolic word produces faith in Christ, for faith cometh by hearing. 21. *That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be [one] in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast [didst] sent me.* The unity of believers in mutual love has its ground and its pattern in the wonderful unity of Father and Son; see on xiv. 10 f. (x. 38, vi. 57), and its result in convincing the world that the mission of the Son of God was truly Divine and Fatherly; that the Father sent the Son to make men His own sons, and brothers among themselves. Whether we are to read, *that they also may be one in us*, with A.V., or omitting *one* with R.V., the sense is practically unchanged: the union and communion which believers have with the Father through the Son in the Spirit is the condition of their union and communion with one another. No human brotherhood can exist apart from the common bond of the individuals to the Lord Jesus Christ; and the Christian communion should testify to its Divine origin. The unbelief of the world, if not occasioned, is largely strengthened and hardened by the disunion of Christians.

22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them ; that  
 23 they may be one, even as we are one : I in them, and thou in  
 me, that they may be made perfect in one ; and that the  
 world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them,  
 24 as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also whom  
 thou hast given me be with me where I am ; that they may  
 behold my glory, which thou hast given me : for thou lovedst  
 25 me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father,  
 the world hath not known thee : but I have known thee, and  
 26 these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have

22-23. *And the glory—me.* The glory of the Son, given Him by the Father, can be nothing else than the Father's love ; that love which constitutes us sons in Christ, the only-begotten Son, i. 13 f. (see ver. 24). Sharers of that love in the free gift and grace of the Son, they attain to the state of perfection in the unity of Father and Son, and in brotherly fellowship. The love of one believer to another and to God, is the proof of Christ's Divine mission, and of the love God has to men which prompted it ; cp. xiv. 21, 23, xv. 9 f., xvi. 27 ; 1 John v. 1, 2. Without love there are no unity and no perfection. Unity is the perfect state.

(4.) *Let them be with me and behold my glory*, ver. 24. The crown of all the petitions of Jesus for His own. They form an ascending series: deliverance from the evil in the world ; sanctification in the truth, realized in purity, knowledge, and consecration to God ; the perfection of unity in God and among themselves ; finally, the being with Christ and seeing His glory. The prayer embraces, therefore, all that concerns us here and hereafter, from our redemption from sin onward to our eternal glory. *Father, I will—world.* The expression of Christ's self-consciousness in the word *I will* is sublime. The love of Christ's heart can be satisfied with nothing less than this, that His people, the Father's gift to Him, be with Him for ever, sharing His blessedness. *Where I am* ; cp. i. 18. See on xii. 26, xiv. 3. *With me.* Two main elements in the future life are the presence and the glory of Christ, to which is added the third, *That they may behold—world.* The contemplation of Christ's glory is the condition of being changed into the same image from glory to glory. Christ's deepest desire is to have His people with Him. He interprets *their* deepest desire in praying that they may behold, and so receive into themselves, His glory, 1 John iii. 2 ; Rom. viii. 17. That glory, as stated above, ver. 22, is the Father's love to Him ; that eternal love as ground of all the communication of Himself which the Father has made to the Son ; see Eph. i. 4 ; 1 Pet. i. 20.

(5.) *Conclusion of the prayer.* 25. *O righteous Father.* The holiness of the Father is concerned in keeping His people from evil. The righteousness of the Father is the Divine attribute most disbelieved in the world. *The world—me.* Ignorance of God, and especially of God as righteousness as well as love, is the world's curse and sin. The world by wisdom knew not God, 1 Cor. i. 21. *But I know Thee* ; cp. viii. 55. Solemn assertion of Christ's competence to declare God to men, such as only one who knew Himself equal with God could make. Only through Christ have we the knowledge of God which saves, the conviction of the righteousness and the assurance of the Fatherhood of God, both of which are needful to inspire faith. *These have known that Thou hast sent me*, xvi. 30 and ver. 6 f. Recognition of the Divineness of Christ's

declared unto them thy name, and will declare *it*; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

person and mission leads on to the full knowledge of God, and His will for men in Christ. 26. *And I—them*; cp. ver. 6. The last and highest object of making known to them the Father's name is that the disciples may, in receiving the revelation through faith in the Revealer, share the very love which the Father has to the Son, with all the implied and wonderful blessedness of a relation of sonship never to be dissolved. But the love of the Father is realized only through the love of the Son, and that in turn through His personal indwelling in the soul by His Spirit; so Christ adds, *and I in them*. For indeed it is only as Jesus dwells in us that we can be the objects of the Father's love, and assure ourselves that we are so. To have God disclosed to us in order that we may know how He loves us (1 John iii. 1) in the person of His only-begotten Son, is the highest of all revelations. It is the knowledge of God culminating in assurance of God's love, and the assurance of His love, in turn, opening a door into the understanding of His glorious being, 1 John iv. 16.

If we believe that the evangelist has given a substantially accurate record of our Lord's utterances to His Father on this memorable night, it is of no practical moment to discuss whether each sentence or clause is precisely as Christ spoke it. Unless John had taken something like a shorthand report at the time, or unless we suppose that the promise of the Spirit to bring all things to the remembrance of the disciples whatsoever their Lord taught them, embraced a literally and verbally correct account of His words, we must hold that the utterances of our Lord—the great leading ideas at least—are reproduced through the medium of the apostle's long-continued reflection, with all the aids afforded by the teaching of the Spirit and events in providence. There are passages in this chapter, it may be safely said, that once heard could not but live in the memory, and that none would have ventured to have written without authority, or even could have imagined, *e.g.* vers. 4, 5, and 24. If it be considered a difficulty that, immediately after the utterance of this prayer, our Lord should, according to the record of the other three Gospels, fall into extreme despondency in Gethsemane (the mention of which is entirely omitted by John), it is a difficulty which must be taken along with all the others that arise, and could not but arise, from the twofoldness of our Lord's condition, reflected in the rapid changes of emotion, from weakness to strength, from despair to triumph, which are portrayed in the record.

### III. CHRIST'S BETRAYAL, TRIAL, CONDEMNATION, AND DEATH, CHS. XVIII., XIX.

CH. XVIII. 1–11. The incidents in the garden of Gethsemane. 12–27. The examination before the high priest, and Peter's denial. 28–40. The first examination by Pilate.

(I.) 1–11. *The betrayal in Gethsemane.* John never allows us to forget that the subject on whom such ignominies were perpetrated as those he is about to record is no other than the Only-begotten of the Father. Rays of His glory lighten up the darkness of His betrayal, and His shameful treatment before Pilate and the high priest, and even His cross. He knows all that is to happen, as in harmony with a Divine plan (ver. 11), and He goes forward to encounter it, submitting to suffer; in presence of His enemies His demeanour is calm and sublime; He overwhelms them by a sudden

CHAP. XVIII. 1. When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.  
 2 And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place; for  
 3 Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples. Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and

flash of His omnipotence; when all besides lose self-possession and are panic-struck, He is collected, and rouses His very enemies to do their duty; He has a constant care over His friends, and provides for their safety; and through all these shine self-control, patience, tenderness, lack of resentment, all glory as of the Only-begotten, full of grace and truth.<sup>1</sup> 1. *When Jesus—disciples.* If we believe that the foregoing prayer was, like all the previous utterances, spoken in the upper room (see xiv. 31), the “going forth” would refer to their quitting the house, perhaps also the city. *Over the brook Cedron*, see 2 Sam. xv. 23; 1 Kings xv. 13; 2 Kings xxiii. 6. The brook rose north of Jerusalem and flowed on the east side of the city, in the deep valley of the same name lying between the city and the Mount of Olives, into the Dead Sea. It is a winter torrent, dry in summer. Scholars are divided between the senses, “the brook of the cedars,” and “the dark or black water.” R.V. apparently declares for the former; but on the whole, the latter seems more probable. Westcott suggests that the dark cedars may have originally given the name to the stream. Lange, on the other hand, says: “The Kedron’s waves were dark and turbid, and in the time of the temple worship the blood of the sacrifices likewise flowed into it and darkened it; hence, doubtless, the name.” Cp. Hart’s well-known hymn, “Gloomy garden in thy bed, washed by Kedron’s waters foul,” etc. Most expositors recall the flight of David over the Cedron from Absalom, 2 Sam. xv. 23, as a type of our Lord’s present act (cp. xiii. 18). It is gratuitous to hold that because John omits the agony the Synoptists are wrong, see xii. 27–33. The story was well known; besides, it is possible that John did not care to handle the subject from motives of delicacy, respecting the solitude which Jesus Himself had desired on the occasion. It lay between Him and His Father; cp. the omission of the agonized cry, “My God,” etc., from the cross. *A garden.* Named Gethsemane in Matthew and Mark, which perhaps was the name of the farm to which the garden belonged. It would be surrounded by a hedge or stone wall. 2. *And Judas—disciples;* cp. Luke xxi. 37. The owner may have been friendly to Jesus. The remark explains, too, how the betrayal took place here. Judas trusted to the customary practice of his Master, and to his Master’s ignorance of the details, at any rate, of his design. 3. *Judas then—weapons.* R.V. reads “the band,” which may be taken either for a portion or the whole of the Roman cohort from the garrison of Antonia (cp. ver. 12, “the captain” or “chiliarch,” see Acts xxi. 31–33, etc.), or for the militia of the Sanhedrim. The former is more probable, as the retainers of the Jewish authorities are specially mentioned, which would

<sup>1</sup> “The Passion is to John, not humiliation, but exaltation; not pain and shame, but glory; not defeat, but victory; and the dying groan he explains as the cry of triumph. He does not draw the veil of sorrow over the Sun of Good Friday, but the sunshine of illumination streams on the head of the Crucified. His Passion scene is the apotheosis of Jesus” (Thoma, p. 661).

4 torches and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, 5 Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am *he*. And Judas also, which 6 betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the 7 ground. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And 8 they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am *he*. If therefore ye seek me, let these go their 9 way: that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of 10 them which thou gavest me have I lost none. Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was 11 Malchus. Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I

imply that the priests had already brought a charge against Jesus as seditious before Pilate, and requested his help and permission to arrest Him. *Lanterns*, etc. The season of Passover was at full moon, but provision was made for a cloudy night, as for an attempt at concealment or escape.

4. *Jesus—ye?* He who was careful that the locality of the upper room should not be known before the hour of meeting in it, in order that His last hours with His own might be undisturbed, now in the full consciousness that His hour had at last come, and in the unconstrained surrender to His Father's will, "went forth" calmly to meet the traitor and His own doom.

5. *They—them*. The recollection of Judas, his fellow-disciple, trusted and loved as all the rest of them until within a few hours back, thus standing and identified with the crowd of the Master's bitter enemies, haunted John to the close of his life. It is a graphic, almost a tragic, touch. 6. *As soon—ground*. Surprise at the quiet, unexpected announcement that He was the man they were in quest of, whom they had supposed it necessary to take lanterns and torches and weapons to secure, as well as some forthputting of Divine majesty, struck panic into them for the moment. Before the calm courage of conscious innocence, force and hostility have often been quelled. Remember, also, that the officers of the priests, some of them at least, had been unmanned by Christ's presence and moral ascendancy before, vii. 46.

7-9. *Then—none*. Jesus has to recover His enemies to their senses, and recall them to their duty. He surrenders without resistance, requesting only that His disciples be unmolested, in which act of loving thoughtfulness the evangelist saw an intention to verify his own words, xvii. 12. The exertion of His Divine influence was on behalf of His disciples, not for Himself. [That John makes no reference to the treacherous kiss of Judas is not so difficult to account for, considering his other omissions of incidents given in the Synoptists, as it is to harmonize his version of what took place with theirs. Probably Judas kissed Jesus before Jesus asked, "Whom seek ye?" We must bear in mind, however, that some confusion was inevitable, and that concerted plans usually suffer somewhat in their execution, and that the sign may not have been so clear and visible as to permit an immediate arrest by the soldiers.] 10, 11. *Then Simon Peter—it*. The

- 12 not drink it? Then the band, and the captain, and officers of  
 13 the Jews, took Jesus, and bound him, and led him away to  
 Annas first: (for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was  
 14 the high priest that same year.) Now Caiaphas was he which  
 gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man  
 should die for the people.  
 15 And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and *so did* another dis-  
 ciple. That disciple was known unto the high priest, and went  
 16 in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. But Peter  
 stood at the door without. Then went out that other dis-  
 ciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto

incident is recorded by all the four evangelists, but John alone mentions Peter's name, and we feel sure it could have been none but he; cp. Luke xxii. 38. Possibly a desire to conceal the fact operated in the earlier traditions. John also alone mentions the name of the sufferer, Malchus; in Neh. x. 4, 27 and xii. 2=Malluch, in xii. 14=Melicu. John's acquaintance with this name is accounted for in ver. 15, see also ver. 26. Christ's *aside* to Peter is in sense the same as in Matt. xxvi. 52, but in terser and more graphic words; in Matt., "Return thy sword into its place;" in John, "Put the sword into the scabbard." The act was an impulse, unreasoning but natural, and only too likely to be followed by the swing of the pendulum to the other side. But for Christ's personal authority and interposition, Luke xxii. 51, the consequences might have been serious, compromising Jesus. *The cup—it?* Peculiar to John in the incident of the betrayal, Matt. xx. 22, xxvi. 39, 42; and cp. ch. xii. 27 f; Ezek. xxiii. 31; Ps. lxxv. 8. Many and bitter were the ingredients of that cup, but all were from the Father's hand, and received in submission, see Heb. ii. 9 ff.

(2.) 12-27. Examination before the high priest, and denial by Peter.  
 12-14. *Then—people.* Annas had been high priest for several years, and still apparently retained great influence (cp. Acts iv. 6, where he is called the high priest). The recalling of the notorious utterance of Caiaphas in the Sanhedrim, xi. 50, is probably with the view of showing what kind of justice awaited Jesus at that tribunal. His case was prejudged. Vers. 15-18 and 25-27 contain the interlude of Peter's denial, skilfully and significantly interwoven into the narrative; the effect of both our Lord's testimony before the high priest and His disciple's shameful denial of Him being intensified. While Jesus witnesses a good confession on men's behalf, His most earnest and prominent disciple, at the very same moment, renounces all relation with Him. 15 f. *And Simon Peter—Peter.* All the disciples fled on the arrest of Jesus, but Peter and "another disciple" ventured to follow the procession from a distance. The other disciple (xx. 2, 3, 4) was the evangelist himself. How he was acquainted with the high priest is only matter of conjecture; possibly through some business relation in connection with the fishing in the Lake of Galilee: he was recognised by the domestics at any rate, and passed into the hall or outer court among the servants unchallenged. Finding that his friend had shrunk from entering, he went back, and speaking to the maid who kept the door, got admission for him also. This incident is passed over by the Synoptists; probably was known only to Peter and John, and seldom or never alluded

17 her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also  
 18 *one* of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; (for it was cold;) and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

19 The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of  
 20 his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said  
 21 nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.  
 22 And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying,

to. 17. *Then—not.* Holding up her lantern to scrutinize the man she was admitting, she suspected at once, from his appearance, which proclaimed fear and agitation, perhaps a Galilean cast, the truth, and challenged him as one of "this fellow's disciples." It was a mere question of curiosity she put, which Peter might have parried, might even have acknowledged quietly without much danger, for had the maid made any threat, Peter was at liberty to withdraw; but in the excitement of the hour, bewildered and afraid in the surroundings in which he found himself, having neglected, too, the solemnly repeated warning to watch lest he entered into temptation, hardly knowing what he did, he denied his Lord. 18. *And the servants—himself.* Hoping all further challenge was at an end, and that he would escape detection, Peter took his place among the crowd of retainers round the fire; but he must have felt uneasy and unhappy. Did John keep beside him? 19–24. Jesus before the high priest. The evangelist resumes the thread of the narrative as it respects Jesus. 19. *The high priest—doctrine.* The high priest, *i.e.* Annas. Those who had once been high priests continued to be called by that title, even though no longer in office. It may be that Caiaphas himself was present, but taking ver. 24 into account, not probable. By interrogating Jesus as to His disciples and teaching, he sought to raise suspicions against Him, and was making it appear that Jesus had been guilty of drawing a knot of conspirators about Him, and inculcating secret doctrines inimical to the public weal. 20 *f. Jesus—said.* Jesus answered that all the world knew the nature of His teaching, which had been openly set forth by Him in synagogue and temple; and then He put the pertinent question, why He, the accused, should be examined as to His doctrine, when there were those who could bear testimony standing round? *In secret have I said nothing.* He expounded many things to the twelve in secret, but they were the things which He taught in public.<sup>1</sup> *They know what I said,* rather, *these know what I said,* meaning the crowd of officers and onlookers. 22. *And when—so?* Whether a blow with the hand or with a rod is

<sup>1</sup> Cp. the passage in the *Apology* of Plato where Socrates speaks: "If any one says that he has ever learned or heard anything from me in private which all the world has not heard, I should like you to know that he is speaking an untruth" (Jowett, i. 366).

- 23 Answerest thou the high priest so? Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why  
 24 smitest thou me? Now Annas had sent him bound unto  
 25 Caiaphas the high priest. And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also *one*  
 26 of his disciples? He denied *it*, and said, I am not. One of the servants of the high priest, (being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off,) saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?  
 27 Peter then denied again, and immediately the cock crew.

uncertain. The officious retainer felt that his master had met a decided check, and sought to curry favour by this coarse insolence, which could be done with impunity on the helpless victim. 23. *Jesus—me?* In absence of protection from His judge, Jesus protests against the illegality of the action in words of striking calmness and point. Nowhere does He appear more elevated above man; cp. the demeanour of His noblest apostle in like circumstances, Acts xxiii. 3. 24. *Now Annas had sent Him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.* (Annas therefore sent Him bound, etc., R.V.) Accepting this reading, the inference is that John relates a preliminary examination before Annas, after which, and in consequence of the signal failure of that astute hierarch to entrap Jesus, He is sent to Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim, where the examination took place which is recorded in all the Synoptists. On this latter John is silent. The apparent difficulty which would then emerge in connection with the denials by Peter, which took place in one and the same "palace," is met by the probable conjecture that Annas and Caiaphas resided in different parts of the same building. 25-27. The second and third denials by Peter. While the examination under Annas was proceeding, Peter was standing by the fire in the hall along with the servants. The four accounts differ in details, as might be expected; they all agree that the first challenge of Peter was by a maid-servant, and that there were three separate denials. It helps to reconcile any apparent discrepancy if we conceive what is more than probable, that on the last occasion at least, more than one of the servants had assailed the unhappy disciple with questions. According to John, the interval between the first and second denial seems to have been longer than that between the second and the third. According to Luke, the third took place "about an hour" after the second. 26. *One—Him.* John was probably an eye- and ear-witness of the scene. His acquaintance with the high priest and his household explains, therefore, his identification of the kinsman of Malchus. 27. *Peter—crew.* At this precise juncture the Lord was being led away to the hall of the Sanhedrim, and turned and looked on Peter, Luke xxii. 61 f. John adds no more. It was enough to record what passed under his own personal observation, and the fulfilment of the Lord's prediction and warning to Peter. The lessons to be drawn from the fall of Peter are obvious: the caution against self-confidence; the humble and constant use of the ordinary means of grace; the avoidance of occasions of temptation; the care against drawing inferences from the conduct of other consistent Christians, which may be misleading; the resolve to suffer no compromise of character or principle, under whatever circumstances.

(3.) 28-40. *Jesus' first examination before Pilate.* Omitting entirely

28 Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment : and it was early ; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled ; but that they  
29 might eat the passover. Pilate then went out unto them,

allusion to the examination of Jesus at the tribunal of the Sanhedrim, given fully in the Synoptists, John hastens on to the more important and decisive trial at the bar of the Roman governor, who alone had power of life and death.

28. *Then led—Passover.* The “judgment hall” or “palace,” R.V. (Greek= *Prætorium*), where Pilate resided, would doubtless be in the fort of Antonia or Herod’s palace. It was usual for the procurators to reside in Jerusalem at the periods of the great feasts to maintain order. *It was early, i.e.* in the fourth watch—about daybreak. *Lest they should be defiled*, Deut. xvi. 4. The evangelist passes no comment on this action of the priests and Pharisees. His self-restraint is scriptural. These men were bent on the murder of a man they knew to be innocent, yet were too scrupulous about ceremonial observances to enter a Gentile house. Violating the fundamental laws of God, they were solicitous about the proper worship of God. Polluting their souls with blood, they dare not pollute their bodies by breach of outer etiquette. They were the men who were more concerned about breaking the fathers’ traditions than about breaking the commandments of God ; straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. Men must have some scrap of conscience left to hide them from themselves. Inward defilement, unprincipled action, are atoned for by outer decorum. The principle is a wide one, capable of much serious application. The natural inference from this remark is that the Passover feast had yet to be celebrated by the Jews ; that, therefore, our Lord had eaten the Last Supper with the disciples on the evening before that on which the Passover was commemorated ; and that He was Himself sacrificed as the typical Passover Lamb on the day on which the families of the nation were engaged in slaying and eating the typical lamb. It has been generally supposed that the Synoptists represent Jesus as eating the Last Supper on the evening on which the Passover lamb was being slain and eaten ; and that therefore John’s account is in direct contradiction. This conclusion may be somewhat premature, see Godet for an exhaustive note on the subject. The Quartodeciman controversy in the second century turned on whether the Lord was crucified on the 14th or 15th Nisan, *i.e.* on the day of the Passover or the day after. 29. *Pilate then went out unto them.* The character of Pilate is one of the most remarkable studies in this Gospel. By a few touches John makes him stand out before us with a precision of individuality which is itself a proof of the genuineness of the Gospel. Pontius Pilate was sixth Roman procurator of Judea. His administration had not been of a kind to ingratiate the Jews. The Emperor Tiberius had once at least intervened on their behalf, and he had been himself obliged to yield on another occasion to their determined opposition against an outrage on their religious prejudices. Though by no means without the instinctive Roman sense of justice, or dead to conscientious feelings, between the fear of offending his master and the fear of once again exasperating the Jews, even though he felt that right was on his side, he had a difficult part to play, and we cannot wonder that he thought first of his own position and safety. He would, if he could, have released Jesus, being persuaded of His innocence ; but his character was discounted by the results of his previous collisions with the Jewish authorities ;

and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?  
 30 They answered and said unto him, If he were not a male-  
 31 factor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. Then  
 said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according  
 to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not  
 32 lawful for us to put any man to death: that the saying of  
 Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what  
 33 death he should die. Then Pilate entered into the judgment  
 hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the  
 34 King of the Jews? Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this

and these knew the man they had to deal with, knew that they had only to play on his selfish fears, and be sufficiently clamorous, to secure their end. His going out of the Prætorium to confer with the members of the Sanhedrim was itself a concession to their scruples. *What accusation bring ye against this man?* No definite formal charge had as yet been made, but as Pilate had granted a band of troops from the castle, he could hardly be ignorant altogether of the nature of the allegations against Jesus, and that they were waiting to receive the authority from himself to carry out the extreme penalty of the law. National and religious questions were by Roman law left to be decided by the Sanhedrim themselves; but the governor might satisfy himself, if he chose, that it was a competent charge, and Pilate was not sorry to take an opportunity of provocation. 30. *They answered—thee.* The Jews were irritated by the governor's question. They sought his acquiescence in their proceeding, not an independent inquiry on his part, which might lead in the exercise of his discretionary power to a reversal of their sentence. They replied that he might depend on it, that they—Jews—would never have handed over a Jew—a fellow-countryman—to Roman authority for extreme penalty had he not been such as to deserve it: *not to THEE would we have delivered him up!* 31 f. *Then said Pilate—die.* Pilate felt the sting of their reply, and ignoring the manifest reason for their appeal to him, advised them ironically to dispose of the case themselves, which had the desired effect of extorting from them a sullen confession of their own impotence as a court, and of their national degradation. [The *Jus Gladii*—power of the sword—was taken from the Sanhedrim when Judea became a Roman province, in the exile of Archelaus, A.D. 6 or 7.] The evangelist perceived in the transference of the power of death-warrant from Jew to Gentile a fulfilment of the Lord's predictions, iii. 14, viii. 28, xii. 32, in which the special mode of death is alluded to. The Jews stoned criminals, Acts vii. 58; the Romans crucified their worst malefactors, foreigners, and slaves.

Vers. 33-37. Pilate's first interview with our Lord. 33. *Then Pilate—Jews?* The question put by the governor is in form such as one would put when conscious that the idea carried absurdity on its face. "So you are the King of the Jews?" It is reasonable to presume that this was the accusation at last hinted at by members of the Sanhedrim, who sought thereby to accelerate Pilate's action by rousing his fears, see Luke xxiii. 2. John thought it of greater importance to unfold the true, secret designs of the men, than to record all they said and alleged.

34. *Jesus—me?* Pilate's question could not be answered without explanation.

35 thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?

36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my

Jesus therefore fitly inquires what meaning he attaches to the words "King of the Jews;" whether his own observation had led him to the conclusion that Jesus was aspiring to the throne of the Jewish kingdom, a political conspirator, in short, or whether he was simply repeating a charge put into his lips by other men, without understanding or caring much what they meant by it. In the former case, Jesus would have answered the question with a simple negative, as indeed He virtually does in ver. 36. In the latter case, Pilate would need some enlightenment as to what the hopes and beliefs of the Jews were. 35. *Pilate—done?* The governor, in repudiating all knowledge of Jewish concerns and interests, answered Christ's question thus: "You do not take *me* for a Jew!" But he felt that Jesus had him at advantage in asking him to explain what he meant by his question; so the words that follow are not free of some measure of taunt when he retorts, *Thine own nation and the chief priests delivered thee to me: what hast thou done?* Surely something flagrant? 36. *Jesus—hence.* Having elicited the admission from Pilate that *he* has no political charge against Him, and that he had simply borrowed words from the Jews—the accusers—without attaching any very definite meaning to them, Jesus proceeds to answer the first question put by Pilate to Him, passing over the last question, with its implied discredit. He claims a kingdom, but it is not of this world, in the sense imagined either by Roman or by Jew. Not a kingdom like earthly kingdoms, based on and maintained by human power, and for secular ends, with geographical limits, and holding its own against other kingdoms of the same nature and by like methods. Christ's kingdom is not of this world, either as to *source*, or as to *nature*, or as to *methods*, or as to *scope and results*. God is its author. It is not founded by human power or ability, and is not maintained by these; but by the directly exerted power of God's Spirit through His Son on men. Human power or wisdom did not originate it, and cannot overthrow it. In its nature it is spiritual, claiming sovereignty over the spirits of men, having for its essential nature a new spiritual constitution for men, as none can enter it unless he is born from above by the Spirit of God; it is therefore inward, having its seat in the disposition of the mind and heart toward God and man; and it grows by the attachment of the individual by his own free will,—not by the accretion of masses,—and as each individual submits himself in soul to the Lord Jesus Christ, and takes His will as the rule of life, and enters into personal, spiritual relationship with Him. It is therefore a kingdom based on love—the mutual love of the King and the subjects. It is the reign of Spirit over spirit, of the living, risen Lord over human hearts. Its methods are not of this world; it cannot be propagated by force or the influence of the intellect alone. It cannot ally itself with the powers of the world for that end. The powers of the world ought to recognise its supremacy, and be guided by and contribute to it. But their methods are not its methods. It diffuses itself by righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; by spiritual influences, by moral power. It is, further, catholic and universal (*for the world*

- 37 kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.
- 38 Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith

because not *of* it, not stained or limited by it), limited by no outward check, such as race, or age, or place; and its outlook is on eternity; as its scope is not simply human wellbeing here, but to make men within it partakers of the life and blessedness of the Father and Son. It is an everlasting kingdom, not of this world, and not perishing along with it; see on iii. 3; cp. also viii. 23, "I am not of this world;" xvii. 14, 16, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world;" Dan. ii. 34, 44. *My servants would fight*, etc. Force would have been met with force. Besides, the surrender of Jesus had been in that case fatal to His claims. To found His kingdom, Jesus gave Himself up to death. Other men *live* to establish supremacy over their fellow-men. Christ dying and rising becomes universal King of men, xii. 32. 37. *Pilate—voice*. "Then indeed you are a king—you?" (Wiclif, *Thanne thou art a king*), preferable to A. and R.V., an affirmation put interrogatively with the pronoun at the end, indicating a shade of contempt. *Thou sayest that I am a king*. (Better, as R.V. margin and the American Revisers suggest, *Thou sayest it because I am a king*.) This mode of affirmation is characteristic of stately speech rather than of colloquial, so Matt. xxvi. 25, 64, xxvii. 11; Mark xv. 2; Luke xxii. 70, xxiii. 3. It is not found in the Old Testament, nor is it classical; but instances occur in the Rabbinic writings (this on the authority of Lücke). When we wish to be emphatic it is not unusual in English to answer a similar question so, "You have said it!" or, "Just as you have said!" or when there is some ambiguity or partial concealment in the case, the phrase is, "So you say!" *To this end was I born*, etc. The pronoun stands first in the sentence marking the self-consciousness of Jesus; and the assertion of personal dignity in contrast with Pilate's contempt. To come into the world meant the same as being born; but suggests the pre-existence of the Son of God, and the personal determination which in dependence on His Father, and execution of His Father's will, brought Him here. *That I should bear witness to the truth*; cp. v. 31 ff., viii. 14-18. The truth to which Christ bore witness is that which includes all other, namely, men's relation to God; and He bore witness both by word and by life; and hence He is the Truth in person, xiv. 6; for only as united to Him are we true men, and so in possession of truth. His kingdom, therefore, is a kingdom of truth; He reigns as Himself holy and true, by the power of the truth which He reveals, truth in the conscience, truth in the heart, and truth in the mind, and over those who, through His grace and Spirit, have become fundamentally true; who stand in the eternal, abiding relationship of peace and love and holiness towards God, 1 John v. 20. *Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice*; cp. on viii. 47, "He that is of God heareth God's words;" 1 John iv. 6, "He that knoweth God heareth us;" also 1 John ii. 21, iii. 19. It is the same idea as in iii. 21, "He that doeth truth cometh to the light;" and in vi. 45, "Every man that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me;" see also vii. 17. To be "of the truth" is to have such a relationship to truth—truth in conscience and in convictions of duty—that the life is regulated thereby. None are "of the

unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in  
 39 him no fault *at all*. But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I  
 40 release unto you the King of the Jews? Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

CHAP. XIX. 1. Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged

truth" who stifle conscience and are faithless to convictions. But for every one who is loyal to the inner voice there is the promise that he will hear and obey the outer voice speaking in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. For the two voices are breathed by the same lip. Let us not put it so: None but they who hear my voice are true. Let us rather put it so as Christ puts it: Every one who is true to himself will and must recognise my voice as the voice of the true and only King of his spirit, x. 26 f. For if Christ and Christianity be not *the truth*, there is no such thing among men. 38. *Pilate saith unto Him, What is truth?* The application to Pilate was close. He was "of self-interest," not of truth; and he winced under the blow. He had heard enough to convince him Jesus was innocent, and too much for his own peace of mind. So he broke off the interview with a polite sneer at the idea of truth—for what had a Roman statesman to do with truth?—and at the amiable enthusiast before him. *And when—all*. An important admission for the supreme judge in the case, the natural consequence of which should have been the immediate dismissal of Jesus, and would have been if Pilate had not feared the Jews. So, afraid to put his foot down boldly, he temporized. 39. *But ye—Jews?* I find no fault in him; but suppose him guilty, he said, and let him go by favour, in accordance with your custom. The origin of this custom is unknown. Similar customs obtained in Greece and Rome. Pilate was sincere in desiring this; but he could not repress the ill-timed sarcasm in the words—"the King of the Jews," levelled not at Jesus but at the Jews themselves, and sure to defeat his object. This exasperated them to frenzy. They did not want his patronage. 40. *Then cried—robber*. The oft-recurring irony of history: the robber set free, the Holy One of God crucified. On Barabbas, see Mark xv. 7; Luke xxiii. 19. Probably the dismissal of Jesus to Herod, recorded in Luke xxiii. 6-12, happened about this time, and immediately after Christ's return this proposal of Pilate to release Him on the ground of the custom referred to was made.

CH. XIX. 1. 1-3. Jesus scourged and mocked by the soldiers. 2. 4-7. Pilate and the Jews. 3. 8-11. Pilate's second interview with Jesus. 4. 12-16. Pilate's last conflict with the Jews, and final yielding to their will. 5. 17-30. The crucifixion, and the events happening round the cross. 6. 31-37. The piercing of Christ's side. 7. 38-42. His burial by Joseph.

(1.) 1-3. Jesus scourged and mocked. By comparing Luke xxiii. 16, 22, we infer that Pilate had not yet relinquished hope of releasing his prisoner; and by ordering the soldiers to scourge Jesus,—the usual legal preliminary to crucifixion,—he trusted that the painful and horrible ordeal would appease the Jews. It was an unrighteous proceeding, but not so unjustifiable and utterly bad as the permission granted to the soldiers

2 *him*. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put *it*  
 3 on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, and said,  
 Hail, King of the Jews: and they smote him with their  
 4 hands. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto  
 them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know  
 5 that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing  
 the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And *Pilate* saith  
 6 unto them, Behold the man! When the chief priests there-  
 fore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify *him*,  
 crucify *him*. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and

to mock their helpless victim. The spectacle of the mock homage, amid shouts of derision and laughter (aimed not at the individual but at the nation He represented), to the "King of the Jews" on the part of the detested Romans, would be taken as one more gratuitous outrage on their feelings by the Jewish authorities, who were compelled to witness it, and made them fiercer in their determination to thwart Pilate's wish (see Eph. ii. 14-16). Scourging, as executed by the Romans on foreigners and slaves (see Acts xxii. 25), was so frightful as to result often in death. The thong was armed at the points with pieces of bone or lead. The victim was stripped, bound to a post, or stretched on a frame, and his back soon became a mass of raw flesh. The shrub from which the branch of thorns was taken cannot be determined with accuracy; either the pliant plant called *Lycium Spinosum*, or the stiffer herb known sometimes as *Vera Crux*, the spines of which are of formidable length. The *purple robe* (scarlet in Matt.) was probably a cast-off military cloak. *They smote Him*, etc., see xviii. 22.

(2.) 4-7. *Pilate's second remonstrance with the Jews.* *Behold, I bring him forth to you*, etc. Pilate wished them to understand that the matter was at an end, so far as he cared to have anything to do with it. To propitiate their "envy" at Jesus, he had let Him be unjustly—as he knew well—scourged and mocked. Thus maltreated, he hopes they will take the prisoner back off his hand, and not press for sentence of death. But the spectacle of Jesus as He now came out of the Praetorium and faced them, wearing marks of insult, shame, violence, cruelty, which the Roman soldiers only too cordially had inflicted on Him as representative of all the hated Jews, made them wince with humiliation as they saw reflected in the degraded man before them their own national dishonour. It is hard indeed to say what motives and feelings were uppermost in Pilate's mind when he exclaimed, *Behold the man!* whether it was a genuine touch of pity, and intended to evoke pity; or whether there were not some shade of contempt, as if to say, This is the man you bring to me as dangerous to public order! Perhaps both; but let us hope that the former predominated. Yet if so, the governor again strangely misunderstood the passions of the men he was dealing with. Roused to a pitch of fury, the priests [note the prevalence of the Sadducean party] and their retainers shouted, "Crucify, crucify!" Pilate retorted in irritation and impatience, Dispose of him yourselves, then, I will not: *I find no fault in him*; a mock permission to those who had not the power. But the Jews knew their man; and the very irritation and impatience he displayed, besides the partial concession to their demand, already made,

- 7 crucify *him*: for I find no fault in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.
- 8 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more
- 9 afraid; and went again into the judgment-hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.
- 10 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have

emboldened them to persist. 7. *The Jews—God.* The pronoun is emphatic: "Though you discharge him—we have a law." They alter their tactics. The accusation of claiming to be King of the Jews had been treated with disdain by Pilate, and another is now preferred. *He made himself the Son of God*, v. 18, x. 30, 33, and cp. Ex. xx. 7 and Lev. xxiv. 16. The former charge was one that naturally came under Pilate's cognizance; but this charge seems at first sight so exclusively one which had interest for the Jews alone, that we ask why they hoped to influence the governor against Jesus by raising it. Placing it thus on strictly national and religious grounds, they nevertheless implied that, even so, consideration was due to them by the Roman magistrate when the prisoner was regarded as guilty by his own countrymen of the gravest offence against their religion and their God. The Roman law might not condemn; but nothing was more revolting to Jewish piety and feeling, and the religion of the Jew had "exercised an extraordinary influence on the Roman mind" (Merivale, vi. 429). Pilate himself as a Roman could not be altogether insensible to what might be implied in such an accusation, since by the law of the empire to be guilty of a "foreign superstition," made one liable to capital punishment; and he could hardly be ignorant of such advice as that given by Dion to Mæcenas, which may be taken as the statesman's view for the time: "Be careful yourself to worship the gods always and everywhere according to the customs of Rome, and compel others to do likewise; but detest and punish the promoters of strange religions, not for the sake of the gods only, but because such innovators beguile men into foreign sentiments and customs; thence arise plots, combinations, and clubs which are especially dangerous to monarchy" (Merivale, vi. 422). On this ground alone, therefore, the Jews might feel they were entitled to urge Pilate for sentence.

(3.) 8-11. *Pilate's second interview with Jesus.* *He was the more afraid.* The charge of the Jews had the opposite effect from what they intended. Pilate's conscience, already plainly at work in his efforts to release Jesus and his repeated assertion of His innocence, stifled in the permission to scourge and deride an innocent and untried man, is roused again. The effect of his first conversation with the prisoner was not yet effaced. He led Jesus back to the Prætorium and asked, *Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer*, Matt. xxvii. 12, 14; Mark xv. 3, 5. When the high priest demanded an answer from Jesus to the accusations of the false witnesses, it is recorded that He kept silence, Matt. xxvi. 63, Mark xiv. 61, though He replied at once to the personal adjuration that followed. More parallel is the silence of Jesus at the bar of Herod, Luke xxiii. 9. He recognised no right, moral or official, in that king to question Him. No doubt the refusal of Jesus to answer Pilate's question now was in part due to the impossibility of

- 11 power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldst have no power *at all* against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the  
 12 greater sin. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar.

such an answer as would satisfy or be accepted, but mainly due to the fact that the governor had forfeited all right to Christ's respect. Knowing Him to be undeserving, he had ordered Him to be scourged and mocked as a gross delinquent. Pilate was nettled, felt insulted before the soldiers, and, like a man conscious of weakness, threatened, asked Jesus if He remembered how completely His fate was in his hands—that a word from him would acquit or condemn. (In R. V. the words *release* and *crucify* change places, and with some reason.) Pilate knew in his soul that he had not this power, or dared not exercise it; hence his boasting of it. 11. *Jesus—sin*, cp. xviii. 11, x. 18, vii. 30. Pilate was but an instrument, and an unconscious one, in executing the will of God. To that supreme will in the complete understanding of, and harmony with, its purpose, Jesus bowed, and felt calm and independent before the will of man, as have all His faithful witnesses when confronting their persecutors. It had been well if Pilate had laid to heart that his magisterial authority was only a brief, delegated trust from God, to whom he would by and by be responsible for its exercise. *Therefore*, etc. Pilate was abusing the authority entrusted to him by the source of all human power; it was not, however, of his own will to inflict injustice; it was, in a sense, the misfortune of his position. Hence the Jews—he that delivered me unto thee—had the greater sin. The Jews were sinning against light, and urging the death of an innocent man; Pilate wished to save Him, but was too weak to resist them. Jesus speaks as if already the sin were consummated. Remark the singular freedom from resentment and all intolerance, even when smarting and faint from the scourging, against the author of it, even the generous consideration for the difficulties of his position.

(4.) 12-16. *Pilate's last conflict with, and final yielding to, the Jews.*  
 12. *And—Cæsar.* Both the feelings and conscience of Pilate were touched by Christ's reminder that he must answer to God for the exercise of the authority derived ultimately from God, and by Christ's ascription to him of the lesser sin, and he made one more attempt—the third—to release Him. The Jewish priests, therefore, had recourse to their last and most effective weapon; returning on the political accusation, they shouted that it would be treason against the emperor to let a claimant of royalty go free. If Pilate had been a strong man, strong in the sense of uprightness and of an honourable record in the past, he might, and would probably, have retorted, How long is it ago since you became such ardent admirers of Cæsar as to be zealous for his prerogatives, sensitive to the infringement of his dignity? If this man were really dangerous in your estimation to the imperial supremacy over you, would you be, as you now are, clamouring for his death? But Pilate was not strong in any sense, and, recollecting the suspicious character of his master ("Qui atrocissime exercebat leges majestatis," Suetonius; "Majestatis crimen omnium accusationum complementum erat," Tacitus), the

13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus  
 forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat, in a place that is  
 14 called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it  
 was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour:  
 15 and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they  
 cried out, Away with *him*, away with *him*, crucify him. Pilate  
 saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests

previous collisions with the Jews out of which he had come with anything but flying colours, he reflected on the probable results of information laid against him at Rome, by which the Jews themselves might appear more anxious for Cæsar's rights than Cæsar's own procurator had been. And the reflection, being unpleasant, decided his conduct. "'Amicus Cæsaris' was a title of honour for Roman legates and prefects" (Lücke). 13. *When Pilate—Gabbatha.* Pilate proceeded to give judgment in legal form. Courts of justice among the Romans were generally held in the open air, and in all important cases, especially where life was involved, sentence had to be pronounced by the judge from an elevated seat. The *judgment-seat* was probably an extemporized tribunal, carried out and placed on a pavement of mosaic in front of the Prætorium (possibly at the head of the steps leading from the Temple to the Castle of Antonia). The Hebrew (Aramæan) word "Gabbatha" is not the translation of the Greek "Pavement," but another name for the place, meaning the back or ridge of the house. 14. *And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour,* vers. 31, 42; Matt. xxvii. 62; Mark xv. 42; Luke xxiii. 54. Day and hour are given of this momentous event in the world's history, when Gentile and Jew decided that the Son of God must die; it was the preparation day for the killing and eating of the Passover lamb, *i.e.* Friday the 14th Nisan by Jewish calendar; see on xviii. 28. The sixth hour, *i.e.* about mid-day (see on i. 39), so that if we presume that the first appeal of the Jews to Pilate, xviii. 28 ("it was early"), happened about sunrise, *i.e.* six o'clock, six hours or thereabout had passed before Pilate gave final judgment. But here we come into conflict with Mark xv. 25, which gives the third hour, *i.e.* nine A.M., as the hour of crucifixion. The solution is not easy, and the indefiniteness of John's statement seems the only door left open to avoid the alternative of loose or erroneous narrative on one side or other. From Matthew and Luke we may gather that our Lord was certainly hanging on the cross at the sixth hour, and probably for some time before that—how long we cannot determine. Six hours might seem too protracted an interval for all that took place after Jesus was brought to Pilate until the governor gave sentence. On the other hand, three hours might seem rather short. One is inclined to ascribe more credibility to an eye-witness like John; yet perhaps the two accounts are needful to present the correct impression. Those may believe, who can, Westcott's explanation that John always adopts Roman computation of time, so that the sixth hour = 6 A.M. *And he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!* Exasperated at the Jews, and sensible that he had been defeated and humiliated, Pilate could not resist the temptation of hurling this sarcasm at them even from the judicial bench, as he pointed to the piteous spectacle of the pale and bleeding sufferer. 15 f. *But—crucified.* Pilate's taunt did not miss its mark, it lashed the priests to fury. He was greeted with savage cries

16 answered, We have no king but Cæsar. Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took 17 Jesus, and led *him* away. And he, bearing his cross, went forth into a place called *the place* of a skull, which is called in

for Christ's crucifixion. *Shall I crucify your king?* with a tone of mock astonishment. *We have no king but Cæsar.* Pilate had goaded them on to this national suicide, which it must have afforded him some measure of grim satisfaction to hear. A remarkable price to pay for the crucifixion of Jesus. It was a denationalizing of themselves, an abandonment of every national hope and claim, a surrender of all their past God-given glory, a prostration of themselves at Cæsar's feet. Such a confession was unique in the history of the Jew. One cannot but think that the Pharisees present must have winced as they heard the priests utter the words which levelled the Jew to the rank of a mere tributary provincial of the Emperor of Rome, and stripped him of all pretext to autonomy, even in religion. To reject his Messiah the Jew had to deny himself, his country, his history, his future, his God. One rejects Christ always at an awful cost. If the Jews had bent Pilate to their will, Pilate might well congratulate himself that his obstinacy to be bent had wrung from the Jews what torture and martyrdom and persecution had failed to extort—their self-abnegation as a people, and homage to his master in Rome. That cry was the death-knell of the Jewish people. *Then delivered he Him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus [and led Him away].* R.V. omits the clause in brackets, so Westcott and Hort. Some form of sentence was doubtless gone through by the governor in handing the prisoner over to the executioners: "I, miles, expedi crucem" (Farrar). The whole of Pilate's action on the judicial bench was summed up in these taunts. There was no inquiry into the merits of the case, no examination of witnesses, no sifting of the allegations. Had Jesus been a Roman, this durst not have happened; but, being a Jew, and delivered into Pilate's power by His own countrymen, the governor set aside every legal form, and all justice, and yielded to the clamour of the men he was afraid of. Persuaded that Jesus was innocent, vacillating between his sense of justice and his fears for his own interests, Pilate presents a spectacle, partly of contempt, partly of pity, and in striking contrast to the Divine majesty of calm confidence in the prisoner at his bar. The trial from first to last was a mockery.

(5.) 17-30. The crucifixion, and the incidents round the cross. 17. *And—Golgotha.* Lit. *And He, bearing for Himself the cross, went forth*—as in R.V. The execution of the sentence fell to the soldiers under charge of a centurion; how many formed the band—whether only the *four* who were the immediate executioners, ver. 23, or a *maniple* or *century*—we do not know. *For Himself.* The criminal had to carry his cross. The words seem intended to be taken along with the accounts in the other Gospels, all of which relate how Simon the Cyrenian was compelled to bear the cross: no doubt in consequence of Christ's physical inability. Apart from the weight, the contact with His lacerated back must have been torture. Perhaps, also, we are meant to reflect how He who preached to His disciples the necessity of cross-bearing gave them the greatest example in His own person. Yet in another sense this cross was borne, not for Himself, but for us all. *Went forth.* In obedience to the Mosaic statute, Lev. xxiv. 14; Num. xv. 35; cp. 1 Kings xxi. 13 and Acts vii. 58 (cp. also the exhorta-

18 the Hebrew, Golgotha; where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.  
 19 And Pilate wrote a title, and put *it* on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF  
 20 THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews; for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and  
 21 it was written in Hebrew, *and* Greek, *and* Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews.  
 22 Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

tion in Heb. xiii. 12 f.), such sentences had to be carried out beyond the city walls. *The place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha.* The name was probably given from the round and bald aspect of the eminence (in Latin, *Calvaria*, Luke xxiii. 33). Golgotha has the same meaning, from the verb to roll. The site is now unknown, except that it was near the city, ver. 20. 18. *Where they crucified Him.* Godet and Farrar may be consulted for accounts of the shape of the cross, the act of crucifixion, and the frightful agonies inflicted by this mode of death. *And two other with Him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.* Whether by accident or by intention, as additional contumely on the Jews, cannot be determined. John does not pause to tell us what Luke had told before, that the one of these stood for all repentant, believing men, and the other for the world of the unrepentant and condemned.

19-22. The title placed by Pilate on Christ's cross. John differs from the Synoptists in inserting *of Nazareth*, so that his account gives the inscription in full. It was the Roman custom that the culprit should have the nature of the crime for which he was sentenced written on a placard and hung round his neck, and so bear it to the place of execution, when it was fastened to the cross; or it was borne in front of him. Pilate's intention is obvious. He meant to take his revenge, and to hold up to ridicule, not the pretensions of Jesus to be King of the Jews, but those of the Jews to have a king. And after their vehement expression of loyalty to Cæsar, he was perfectly justified. He "hoisted them with their own petard." The title (John alone uses the Latin word *Titulus*) was an honour in disguise to Jesus, marking Him out as no ordinary criminal, and fulfilling, in human unconsciousness of God's will, the prophecies of Scripture. *In Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.* Hebrew, or Aramean, was the national language; Greek, the language of the whole civilised world; Latin, the official language—that of the governor. There were always "strangers" at Jerusalem on the occasion of the great feasts. *Then said the chief priests of the Jews.* Expositors call attention to the phrase as being the only one of its kind in the N. T. The Jewish authorities felt the public opprobrium on their national hopes and claims. They read it rightly, as Pilate wished they should: Here is crucified, not this Jesus of Nazareth only, but any other man who aspires to be the King of the Jews; and they attempted in vain to get Pilate to alter the inscription to their mind. He knew that he had them in a dilemma. They might complain to the emperor that his procurator would not condemn a claimant to the Jewish throne; they could hardly complain that in sentencing him he had designated him—King of the Jews. His retort was short and sharp. 23, 24. The soldiers round the

- 23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part ; and also *his* coat : now the coat was without seam, woven from  
 24 the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be : that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.
- 25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Cleophas, and Mary

cross. Four men were usually told off for the horrible duty, and to them as perquisites fell the clothes of the doomed prisoners. This scene, the talk of the soldiers among themselves, and their act, must be from the hand of one who was there, ver. 26. In the mode of division and in the fact, John saw a fulfilment of Ps. xxii. 18. He quotes the exact words of the LXX. Cp. on xiii. 18. In Ps. xxii. as in Isa. liii., Messianic prophecy reaches its "high-water mark." Both passages, likely belonging to the same period of Israel's history, the exile in Babylon, and bearing clear traces of the discipline of suffering, might have been written by one who, as John did, stood near the cross and beheld the things which were there done. To a fact like that justice ought always to be done. It may be, as Cheyne suggests, that we ought not to feel surprise at such definite detailed description—centuries beforehand—of that which was ordained by God before the foundation of the world, and which has been the central event in the world's history—the stupendous fact of the death of the Son of God for sin. A pre-established harmony might well exist ; perhaps, we may say, *ought* to have existed. Certain principles of Messianic interpretation are always to be held to. For example : That the mind of the writer is to be distinguished from the mind of the Spirit of Christ, who was in him ; that all the writer looks forward to takes shape in forms derived from the times in which he lives ; that personal experiences are the ground on which prophetic truth is built ; and that the truth is not exhausted by such personal experiences. The interpretation of the present day differs from that of the past chiefly (1) in rooting Messianic prophecy firmly in the times when it saw the light, making it the child of these times ; and, therefore, in explaining it less as direct and pointed allusion to the Christ ; and (2) in emphasizing *less* such isolated detailed predictions, as the present, imbedded in prophecy like gems, and *more* the whole combined, concurrent lines of anticipation in the old economy converging at last on Christ Incarnate, dying, and rising again. *These things therefore the soldiers did.* They were the unconscious instruments in the hands of God, who had guided the thoughts of the writer centuries before, and now guided the wills and conduct of these soldiers to fulfilment. Explain it as we may, we cannot but feel we are in presence of Him to whom are known all His works from the foundation of the world.

25-27. Jesus commits His mother to the care of John. This touching incident is peculiar to the fourth Gospel ; though the fact of several women standing and beholding afar off is mentioned by the Synoptists, and the names of *three* are given by both Matthew and Mark—namely, Mary Magdalene, *Mary the wife of Cleophas* (or Alphaeus) and mother of James

- 26 Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his  
 27 mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own *home*.

the Less and of Joses, and Salome the wife of Zebedee and mother of James and John. Our evangelist adds to these, Mary the mother of Jesus; while he speaks of his own mother (after his own fashion) as *the sister of His (i.e. Jesus') mother*. It would appear, therefore, that John and James were first cousins of their Master. It is a noteworthy fact that the mother of the Lord is not alluded to by any of the Synoptists. The Mariolatry of the Church of Rome has no sanction in them at least. *When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by whom He loved*. There had been a moment when the mother's instincts and the love of the disciple urged them, at any personal risk, to steal nearer the cross. The evangelist does not attempt to tell us what his feelings at that awful hour were, much less to expose the mother's agony. At the same time, writing after the resurrection and the ascension, not to speak of the many years of triumphant progress of the gospel, the remembrance of these moments of intolerable grief must have been toned down—lost in profound joy and thankfulness to the God of such a salvation. The near relationship of John, as well as Jesus' peculiar love to him, may explain this last proof of confidence in his loyalty and affection, when Jesus entrusted His mother to his care. Besides, John was the only one to whom Jesus could at that hour commit so dear and sacred a charge: his devotion to his dying Lord had earned the honourable and enviable distinction of being singled out to pay these tender, filial offices which Jesus had faithfully fulfilled, but could fulfil no more. Jesus, in short, left His mother to the loving solicitude of His Church (a debt they would owe to Him, having Him no longer to serve), in the person of the one representative of His disciples near Him at the hour of death. The question therefore, Why not to her other sons? must be allowed to answer itself in the light of these facts.

To His mother, the words, *Woman, behold thy son!* were meant in merciful compassion, advising her withdrawal from the cross, sparing her the anguish of the last moments; were meant to suggest to her with all tenderness that the earthly tie between Him and her was now broken for ever (the new wonderful tie binding sinner and Saviour would take its place, as wonderful, as precious and necessary to her as to any other redeemed soul); and yet that with the thoughtfulness which did not seek its own even in the last extremity He had provided for her loneliness and grief, and was giving her a son in His own place; for when Christ sundered old ties, He often forms new for His disciples. And His cross is the place where new and lasting ties are formed, more enduring than those which concern this world only. Also—and the lesson is applicable to all—the words meant that a check must be put even on grief so natural as a mother's for a son: and that in the discovery of fresh and new duties for God's sake must life be spent,—not in helpless bewailing over the irrevocable past,—however precious that has been. Jesus might have committed His mother simply to God; but the place and the value of human sympathy are nowhere more fully recognised than in His own life. *To his own home*. To conclude from this expression, as Reynolds

- 28 After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.  
 29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar : and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put *it* upon hyssop, and put *it* to  
 30 his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished : and he bowed his head, and gave up

does, *Int.* xc., that John had a house in Jerusalem at the time (cp. xx. 10), seems hardly warranted. Wherever he resided, Mary would reside with him. Mary is only once again mentioned in the N. T., Acts i. 14. We may believe that the evangelist was indebted to Mary for several incidents otherwise unknown; such as some which took place at the wedding in Cana, ch. ii., or when His brethren urged Him to go to Jerusalem, ch. vii. How far the influence of this remarkable woman—one who had pondered many things in her heart, and chiefest of all her own Son and Lord, and in aspects that none but she could have had access to—told on the evangelist, and through him on this Gospel, we may be allowed to conjecture, if we cannot assert. It is significant that from this source, if from any, a “Gospel of the Infancy” might have emanated, and has not. The reverent reticence of John on the subject of Mary is noteworthy. This incident fitly goes with that of ii. 1–11.

28–30. **The death of Jesus.** *After this.* An indefinite interval, during which the darkness over all the land, the mental agony, and cry of our Lord (Matt. xxvii. and Mark xv.) must have taken place. *Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished [finished].* The evangelist represents the Lord here, as always, in full consciousness of all that must happen. He knew that His active and passive obedience was at an end, that He had suffered enough; He knew that Scripture prophecy regarding Him was all but verified; and not as a weak, suffering mortal, but as God, as master of His fate, even when apparently helpless, He prepared Himself to die, to terminate by His own action the bond binding body and soul. *That the scripture might be fulfilled [accomplished] saith, I thirst* (Ps. xxii. 15). He said these words *in order that* scripture might be fulfilled. There was still one prediction waiting to be verified, and as if interposing between Jesus and death; and in order that this might no longer be in the way, He saith, etc. The reference is not to all prophecy, but to this single prediction in particular, for all prophecy was not accomplished even in the death itself. No doubt it sounds mechanical to modern ears, that Jesus spoke in order to fulfil prophecy, but we must do justice to John's conception; and in the case of the exceptional personality of our Lord we must reconcile as best we may the natural prompting for the assuaging of the frightful thirst that parched His lips, and the Divine consciousness of the stage He had reached in His ordeal of endurance.  
 29. *Now—mouth.* The vinegar (Lat. *posca*), sour wine drunk by the soldiers. (Distinguish this incident from that recorded in Matt. xxvii. 34; Mark xv. 23; Luke xxiii. 36.) John saw in this the fulfilment of Ps. lxix. 21, “In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” No psalm is more frequently quoted in the New Testament except Ps. xxii.; see on ver. 24 and xiii. 18. The sponge was placed on the end of a branch of hyssop, a plant of perhaps 1½ feet in height, so that it is concluded the cross could not have been very high. 30. *When—ghost.* *It is finished*, xvii. 4. These vicarious sufferings of the Son of God, the work for which His Father had sent Him

31 the ghost. The Jews therefore, because it was the prepara-

into the world, His humiliation, His personal discipline qualifying Him to be a faithful and merciful High Priest for men, the old dispensation of preparation and shadow, the great salvation of God for sinners purposed in eternal ages, achieved through the atoning sacrifice of the eternal Son,—all these were finished. He who once had finished creation (Gen. ii. 1) had now finished redemption. All that followed which was necessary for the application to men of the salvation, thus finished and purchased,—the resurrection and ascension to the right hand of glory, and the gift of the Holy Spirit,—came as the fruit and reward of the toil and suffering now closed. Matthew records the cry of agony which Jesus, borrowing the words of Ps. xxii., uttered, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” thus linking on the prophecies of the Old Testament at their highest point to their fulfilment in the Messiah under the penal woes of the cross. Luke records the cry of faith on the part of the Son of Man when enduring the last and most formidable of His earthly experiences, “Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit!” And John records the cry of the Son of God, conscious even in that extreme moment of shame and suffering of all He was and of all He had come to do; Himself, Lord of life and of death, “It is finished!” *And He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost [and surrendered the spirit].* Luke is more explicit, recording the words in which the Lord commended His soul into the Father’s hands, xxiii. 46. Calling on His Father, and with words of scripture (Ps. xxxi. 5) on His lips, He sundered the tie between His body and soul of His own accord, for no man took His life from Him, and death from natural causes could not have been so speedy,—He did not succumb under the pain of crucifixion,—and passed beyond the conditions of this earthly existence. But if Christ’s death was a free spontaneous act, in every sense, as a sacrifice for men, it was none the less a death such as men must die. To all the experiences of life Jesus added this last and most formidable of our mortal experiences, in order that His course as man might be completed, that in all points He might be tried as we are. He endured the humiliation and the awful mystery of death. How it was He ruptured the bond binding body and soul we cannot tell, just as little as we can tell how He knit both together to His Divine nature at the first, and as little as we can tell how it was that though His human spirit had now quitted its fleshly tenement, His Divine nature had not been taken from either. Though that body was now a dead body, it was still part of Christ’s Divine person. The dissolution on the cross was of soul and body, not of the human and Divine natures. In the three hours of external darkness Jesus endured that internal and spiritual darkness, finding relief at the climax of intolerable anguish in the cry, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” In these sufferings we must seek the penal woes that expiated human guilt. The mere dissolution of body and soul need not in itself be a punishment on sin. But because of sin it has become one of the most severe and searching disciplines through which men must pass, sifting away from them all that the lesser experiences of life had failed to remove. Separation of body and soul in immediate prospect is one of the most overwhelming vicissitudes, and it was indispensable even in this respect that the Captain of our salvation should also pass through it, even if in itself it were not a penal infliction, in order that He might be perfected, and touched with a feeling of all our infirmities. He was trustful in death, He saw His Father opening His arms to receive

tion, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be  
 32 taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.  
 33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead  
 34 already, they brake not his legs : but one of the soldiers with

Him, while yet He fully realized the feelings and position of men in these terrible conditions. Again, as human life is removed by death from earth and earth's uses, so it was necessary on the part of our Lord to show that His life was now removed from the limits of earthly existence, and transferred to the uses and purposes of the heavenly one. Death was the beginning of a new condition in which the work done here should be made full use of. For death is not only the termination of life, it is the completion of it. And Jesus therefore in death completed His life, and consecrated it for evermore to Him into whose hands He surrendered it. "In that He liveth, He liveth unto God." Death closes and completes life. God receiving it back determines how to use, judges it, renders to each according to his work. Jesus, too, as man must die, must feel that strange and awful sensation which possesses the mind and heart of the dying, that his life is passing away from under his control, that he has no longer any power over it, that it is going at another's will, and he has simply to submit and wait in utter impotency, and see what is to be done with him. That most mysterious sinking down into nothingness which attends death, with no power to avert any issue, must be felt, begetting a trust in God of a most intense and despairing kind, in order that Jesus may be the perfected High Priest of His people. As Son of Man He died and He was judged. In other words, Christ's death was like His own person, partly human and partly Divine. In so far as it was Divine it was an act accomplished by the combined will of His Father and Himself. It was not in this sense something He endured, it was something which He *did*, and hence its meritoriousness for us. In so far as it was human, it was the result of the violence and injustice of wicked men.

(6.) 31-37. The piercing of the side of Jesus. 31. *The preparation*, see ver. 14. *That Sabbath day was an high day*, being both the weekly Sabbath and the first day of the Passover festival (Jewish days were reckoned from sunset to sunset), Lev. xxiii. 5-7. The Jews do not seem to have had the ordinance of Deut. xxi. 22 f. in view ; but in God's providence that also was fulfilled, a fact of which Paul makes use, Gal. iii. 13. The Roman custom was to allow the bodies to rot on the cross ; but the spectacle would have been repugnant on such an occasion to the Jews, profaning, in their judgment, their holy things. Besides, there would have been something painfully incongruous in commemorating their birth hour as a nation while their "King" hung on the cross just outside the walls. *That their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.* This process,—*crurifragium*,—practised usually on slaves, and occasionally as a punishment by itself, was intended to hasten death in this case at least, in order to make it certain before the bodies were conveyed away. 32 f. *Then came—legs.* Does the narrative imply that there was a manifest

35 a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. And he that saw *it* bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might

unwillingness on the part of the soldiers to exercise this cruelty on Jesus, and that they deferred Him to the last? Whether the soldiers were the quaternion watching, or others, it is impossible to say; but the apparent hesitation on the part of the watch would be accounted for in the record of Matt. xxvii. 54; Mark xv. 39; Luke xxiii. 47. 34. *But one—water.* The soldier wished to make proof of death certain, and drove his lance home into Christ's side; probably the *left* side, or towards it. The wound must have been large, judging by ch. xx. 27, and therefore sufficient to cause death of itself. Suspicion of the actual death of Jesus is one of the last refuges of those who, denying the resurrection, feel it necessary to account for the results of faith in the resurrection. If this incident be true, Jesus could not have merely swooned away. *Blood and water.* Medical science comes to our help here by teaching us that the issue of blood and water proves (1) the penetration by the spear of the *pericardium* at least, if not the *heart* itself; and (2) the previous occurrence of death, in the fact that the blood was already coagulating. There is also made to depend on these contingencies the theory that our Lord died, *literally*, of a broken heart, and allusion is made to Ps. xxii. 14. The *reality* and the *physical cause* of our Lord's death are different subjects; and with regard to the former, while every side light has its own value, we may bear in mind that the apostolic testimony as an integral part of the Gospel record and of the whole history of the revelation of God, together with the testimony of the Holy Spirit, is an ultimate tribunal of appeal. The fact of Christ's death may be proved also from the *necessity* for it, the *prophecies* that went before, and the *response* in our breasts which the record of it awakens. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?" "No sceptical criticism has been hitherto in the position of proving even only the probability that Jesus did not *actually* die" (Lücke). 35-37. *And—pierced.* To John, an eye-witness of the scene (having probably returned to the cross after leaving Christ's mother with friends), this incident appeared so weighty as a confirmation of prophecy, that he pauses to emphasize the facts (1) that he was a beholder of what was done; (2) that his personal testimony is absolutely infallible; and (3) that his object is to inspire his readers with a like faith to his own. 1. According to his own statement in 1 John v. 6, 8, there was a deep significance in the issue of blood and water from the wounded body of the Lord. "This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." The interpretation of this passage belongs to the Epistle, not to the Gospel; but we may say that the fact John here records is the basis on which he builds the doctrines of his Epistle, and that he viewed the outflow of the blood and water not as a proof of his Saviour's death, so much as a symbolic expression of the great work which He came to do on men: to shed His blood as a propitiation for their sins, and to impart to them, consequently, the Holy Spirit, as the cleansing water of regeneration and renewal. "Blood and water" are the two

- 36 believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.
- 37 And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

witnesses, when combined in the Spirit's hand, of Christ's power to cleanse from guilt, and Christ's power to sanctify; Christ our righteousness and Christ our holiness. (So in Toplady's hymn, "Let the water and the blood," etc.) 2. But a signification of singular importance attaches to the action of the soldiers. *For these things were done, that the scripture,* etc. Even in the deepest depth of humiliation, His body a poor pitiful spectacle—a lifeless, bloody corpse—on the cross, to John's eye the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father full of grace and truth was discernible; so that even dying He is fulfilling the God-established conditions that must meet in the Messiah. An atmosphere of verification of prophecy hung round the cross, dissolving every element of shame, a sun throwing a rainbow of glory over the cloud and rain storm of woe and bitterness, the will of God moving the thoughts and hands of men as if they were but unconscious puppets, compelling their acts, even their stray impulses, to glorify His Son. (1.) In the preservation of Jesus' body from the indignity that befell the still living malefactors, John saw a fulfilment of the ordinance prescribed in connection with the ritual of the Passover. The lamb sacrificed must not have a bone broken, must be roasted whole, Ex. xii. 46; Num. ix. 12 (Ps. xxxiv. 20). It was needful that the great Antitype, already introduced to His readers as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world, should correspond to every such requirement of the past preparatory economy, assuring us that Jesus was truly the Great Personal Deliverer, to whom such institutions, and the facts that gave rise to them, pointed, 1 Cor. v. 7; that both the old and the new proceed from the same mind, and that the new was in point of fact the truly oldest of all—"the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," and that the old must therefore have its reason and end in the new. We must try to understand the effect which such correspondences, that may appear outward and artificial to ourselves, had on the minds of Jews accustomed to venerate their ancient God-given ceremonies. But we feel that the scope of such an institution could not be in itself. The bones of Christ's body were not broken; *not* simply in order that this similarity be secured, but for reasons that lay deeper. Our Lord's dead body was a sacred thing; the curse on sin had already been fully expiated by the sufferings preceding it, namely, by that God-forsakenness which is spiritual death; hence it was due to that body, set free in God's account from the penalty of sin, that it be kept from the indignities which men might put on it. Hence God watched over it while it still hung on the cross, and prevented it from sharing unnecessary violence, as well as some ignominious, common and unknown felon's grave. (2.) Not only was a typical institution answered, but a direct prophecy was fulfilled: *They shall look on Him whom they pierced*, Zech. xii. 10. (A.V. *They shall look upon me whom they have pierced*; R.V. *They shall look unto me* [margin, *Him*] *whom they have pierced*.) It is to be noted that while John follows the LXX. in the former quotation, he departs from it altogether in this quotation and in Rev. i. 7, since it does not contain this precise signification of "piercing,"

38 And after this, Joseph of Arimathæa, (being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews,) besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus : and Pilate gave

which the Hebrew term conveys, (cp. the same term in Zech. xiii. 3), but simply that of *insulting* or *despising*. The passage is taken from a Messianic prophecy, in the course of which Jehovah promises to pour on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication, the result of which will be that they shall repent of their hard-heartedness, and turn to Himself with great contrition. That the Messiah is represented as Jehovah Himself is important ; but the centre of interest for John lay in the conception of "piercing," and he felt that the prediction was now literally and circumstantially fulfilled, not in the crucifixion generally, but in this action of the Roman soldier. No doubt it is the Jews of whom this is predicted ; but the whole responsibility for the cross and its ignominies lay on the Jews, and already when the evangelist wrote these words many a Jew unbelieving, and rejecting Christ at the time of His crucifixion, had repented, and, looking to the pierced Saviour, had found mercy. The complete fulfilment awaits the time of God.<sup>1</sup> These remarkable fulfilments of Messianic prophecy produced the effect on John of a complete faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God and Saviour of men, the Lamb of God slain for sin ; and he solemnly attests his own veracity and trustworthiness as an eye-witness of these fulfilments. *His record [witness] is true, i.e. ideally true, genuinely and absolutely true, and reliable for all men ; cp. xxi. 24, and 1 John throughout, e.g. i. 1-3, ii. 21, iv. 14, v. 9-11, 13.* This emphatic assurance of his credibility by the apostle is of great moment to the Church of all time. It perhaps implies the presence of doubt at the date of writing about the events of the cross. *That ye also may believe*, not merely that such things did take place, but that, such things having taken place, Jesus is the Christ who should come, and that life is in His name, xx. 31.

(7.) 38-42. The burial of Jesus' body by Joseph and Nicodemus. Joseph of Arimathæa, cp. Luke xxiii. 50, 51 ; Matt. xxvii. 57 f. ; Mark xv. 43 f. Luke calls Arimathæa "a city of the Jews," "but this presents no objection to its identification with the prophet Samuel's birthplace, the Ramah of 1 Sam. i. 1, which is named in the LXX. Armathaim" (Smith's *Bible Dictionary*). This was either Joseph's birthplace or residence, or both. *A disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews.* Both he and Nicodemus (iii. 1, vii. 50), who is unnamed by the other Gospels, answer this description. It is well to recognise the fact that there are men who are disciples of Christ "in secret," who have not the courage of their convictions, who are held back by fear or shame, or some other more or less unworthy motive. Both these men were honourable members of the Sanhedrim, of the Pharisaic party, upright, unprejudiced, sincere, and altogether disposed to accept Jesus as Christ. And if secrecy cannot be always defended, it is well we should see that these men did now for the body of Jesus what none else could have done, what even they themselves might have been unable to do had a premature confession of Jesus compromised their influence and position. For they not only did what none could do who were outwardly devoted to Jesus, or did it in a costlier way,—they did what none could have done but themselves, and

<sup>1</sup> For some striking remarks on the "legacy of Christ's life-blood" to men, see Thoma, pp. 704, 705.

*him* leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.  
 39 And there came also Nicodemus, (which at the first came to  
 Jesus by night,) and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes,  
 40 about an hundred pound *weight*. Then took they the body  
 of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the  
 41 manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he  
 was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new  
 42 sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they  
 Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation *day*; for the  
 sepulchre was nigh at hand.

which, if not done, would have seriously weakened the proofs of the resurrection. But for Joseph's intercession, the body of Jesus might (humanly speaking) have been cast into some common pit with the bodies of the malefactors. Thus those who have stood nearest Christ must sometimes move aside that a stranger may come and lay at His feet a costly tribute of affection, indispensable to Him (xii. 3, 7). Christ's influence, too, often works in channels that run underground for a while, and we had better not judge too hastily or incautiously. The service rendered was absolutely needful, a service of love and loyalty, one that taxed courage too, for it meant to some degree an identification of themselves with the disciples and admirers of Jesus. Joseph gave the tomb, Nicodemus gave an hundred pound weight of aromatic herbs. *He came therefore and took [away] the body of Jesus.* Matthew and Mark say expressly that Joseph took it *down* from the cross. The soldiers might assist by Pilate's orders, but Joseph was quite able to secure help otherwise. *A mixture [roll, Westcott and Hort] of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight,* see on xi. 39. Myrrh was a fragrant gum, and aloes a sweet-scented wood, which, being pounded together, were placed on the linen which swathed the body. The large quantity indicated the reverence felt by Nicodemus for Jesus. *As the manner of the Jews is to bury.* The writer betrays his non-Jewish surroundings, ii. 6, iv. 9. The Egyptian mode of embalming was different (Wilkinson, vol. iii.). The women who, according to the Synoptists, were watching the scene, had determined to supplement these last offices, which could hardly have been but hurried in the circumstances, so soon as the Sabbath was over. *Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden.* A fact passed over by the Synoptists; the garden was probably the property of Joseph, though John is silent on this point. In a garden human life began, and in that garden sin wrought death and misery, and threatened the ruin of human hope. In a garden the precious seed of Divine hope was planted again in the body of Jesus, in which sin's curse had spent itself, and from that seed branches now are stretched, and blossoms scattered through all the world. *A new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.* Matthew relates the former and Luke the latter, and all the three Synoptists relate that the sepulchre was hewn out of the rock. It was the will of God that that sacred body, now a *curseless* object, should be treated with all the honour and reverence that attended the sepulture of the kings of the Jews; for Jesus died as the King of the Jews. *There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.* The near proximity of the tomb would have availed nothing had the property not belonged to Joseph, who had personally demanded the body,

CHAP. XX. 1. The first *day* of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth  
 2 the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken way the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where  
 3 they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and that  
 4 other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together : and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came  
 5 first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, *and looking*  
 6 *in*, saw the linen clothes lying ; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the  
 7 sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin,

and now devoted to it the vault which he had prepared for his own. The last ceremonies were hastened through because the hour for celebrating the Passover meal was coming on ; and it may have been an argument in favour of the granting of Joseph's request, and preventing any resistance of the Jews, that the " sepulchre was nigh at hand."

#### IV. RESURRECTION AND APPEARANCE TO HIS DISCIPLES IN JERUSALEM, CH. XX.

CH. XX. (1) 1-10. The fact of the resurrection attested by several of the disciples. (2) 11-18. The Lord appears to Mary Magdalene. (3) 19-29. The Lord's appearances to His disciples, and special appeal to Thomas. (4) 30, 31. Conclusion and scope of Gospel.

(1.) 1-10. The Resurrection attested by Mary, Peter, and John. The evangelist tells his readers how he and his friend Simon Peter first learned that the tomb was empty, and how they, on hastening to it, were convinced that their Lord had risen. 1. *The first day—sepulchre.* There were at least other two women with this Mary, Matt. xxviii., Mark xvi., Luke xxiii. 55 f., and xxiv. 1, and this is implied in ver. 2, " We know not," etc., but it did not fall within John's scope to mention them. 2. *Then she runneth—Him.* She probably left the others at the tomb while she hastened to tell the disciples, and while she was absent the events occurred which the Synoptists record, differing in details, but agreeing generally, Matt. xxviii. 5-8 ; Mark xvi. 5-8 ; Luke xxiv. 4-10. Note the mark of genuineness in the word *runneth*. John remembered well her breathless agitation as she roused them that early dawn. 3, 4. *Peter—sepulchre.* According to Luke xxiv. 12, Peter alone (if the verse be genuine). The two running together through the quiet streets, and the younger man getting ahead of the elder, are graphic touches. 5. *And he—in. Stooping down.* The action might comport with either a tomb underneath the surface of the ground, or a tomb cut sideways out of the rock ; see xi. 38. *The linen clothes lying, i.e.* with no body under them. 6. *Then—lie ;* characteristic touches of the two disciples ; John lingering, shrinking, reflecting, wondering ; Simon bold, impetuous, ardent, impatient ; see xxi. 7. The Greek verb rendered *seeth* is here stronger, *marketh, beholdeth*,—careful inspection is meant. 7. *And the*

- that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but  
 8 wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also  
 that other disciple which came first to the sepulchre, and he  
 9 saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture,  
 10 that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples  
 went away again unto their own home.  
 11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping : and, as  
 she wept, she stooped down, *and looked* into the sepulchre,

*napkin—itsself*; see xi. 44. The appearance of the tomb therefore compelled two conclusions,—*first*, that the body had not been removed by any one, for why unroll the linen bandages? and *second*, that whatever had happened, a spirit of order and calmness had prevailed. If John is telling us what is true, there is but one alternative to the resurrection, that certain persons had entered the tomb while the Roman sentinels were asleep, had leisurely stripped the body, and laid the linen bandages and the napkin in orderly fashion, and then gone with their burden,—where, no one can tell. 8. *Then went—believed.* John drew the only possible inference; the light struck into his mind and soul on the spot. He believed that the Lord had risen from the dead. 9. *For as yet—dead.* The disciples had never understood the signification of Scripture with which they were familiar, such as Ps. ii., xvi.; Isa. liii., etc. The Lord had endeavoured to enlist their sympathies on the point, had even directly told them He would die and rise again the third day, Matt. xvi. 21; Mark viii. 31; Luke ix. 22. But their expectations and views of His kingdom were so different that it was by no means strange that they could not apprehend, even if His words were as plain and direct as they are reported. And his death was something beyond which they were totally helpless to look. It was an end put to all their hopes. They were left in darkness and despair, though still clinging to the faith that somehow their Master might justify their intense faith in Him. And even this may be more than they felt between the terrible hour of betrayal and the hour of resurrection. Here at least we have John's explicit testimony that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, as a necessary fulfilment of Scripture, had not till now, when he was confronted with the proofs of the fact, dawned on his soul. It is useful to contrast the way in which the women who accompanied Mary Magdalene and these two disciples were respectively assured of the resurrection. To the former, as more emotional, and less accustomed to the use of reason, an angel (or two angels, so Luke) appeared and conveyed the glad tidings to them. To the latter there was no angelic vision granted. All had been "drawn back into heaven" when they reached the spot. Peter and John simply exercised their judgments on the facts before their eyes, and formed the only conclusion possible, that Jesus had indeed risen. God, even in this overwhelming event, leaving, so far as was possible, the mind to work on the material presented to it, and not overriding intelligent reflection by permitting Christ to appear to them as yet. So the two disciples saw and believed, and left the tomb. Their feelings are veiled.

(2.) 11-18. Christ's appearance to Mary Magdalene. 11. *But Mary—sepulchre.* It does not appear that the two disciples communicated their newly-born faith to Mary Magdalene. Perhaps they had not seen her again. Perhaps they thought it wiser to wait the issue of events even if they

- 12 and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.  
 13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and  
 14 I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and

had. So she was left alone, the outward solitude aptly reflecting that inner spiritual solitude which she might now fear, when the wonderful Friend was away who had by His power and kindness rescued her from sin and made the better life easy, who had also by His love for her gained fellowship for her with the men and women she could esteem and be helped by. To her the death of Jesus might therefore seem a more irreparable loss than to any other. And she was denied the poor comfort even of weeping over His corpse, and paying the last tender rites of reverence and love. Reluctant to abandon all hope, clinging, as we all do, to the outward form which has contained the dear object of love, as if by clinging to it we could bring back what is no longer there, with a woman's persistence and affection refusing to believe but that still, even after the scrutiny of the two men, some trace might be found of that beloved object, she lingered in the garden; and she once again stooped down, and through her tears looked into the sepulchre.

12. *And seeth [beholdeth]—lain.* Probably the same two angels as had been seen already by the other women (Luke xxiv. 4). *White* is the symbol of the purity and glory of heaven. They were *sitting*,—an accommodation to our ideas,—to suggest how they had been occupied all through the hours when the body of Jesus lay there, keeping watch over it, while the Roman sentinels guarded without (Ps. xci. 11). That there is a certain correspondence between the vision and the mental condition of the beholder is evident, when we compare the different effects produced by the same angel or angels on the Roman guard, on the two women, and on Mary Magdalene respectively, see Matt. xxviii. 1-8. 13. *And—Him.* Mary's intense emotion of love and longing preoccupies her against the shock of the supernatural apparition. Even the instincts of terror were quenched. What was a vision of angels to her if they brought not her Lord with them? Angels are "ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation." They are interested in mankind, concerned in human grief as in human joy. There are things angels can and cannot do. These two sent the first women away with mingled joy and fear, and struck the terror of death into the Romans; but there are feelings which none but the touch of the Master Himself can guide and control. Mary Magdalene is not bid look where Jesus lay, is not comforted as the others were. The angels ask in sympathy why she weeps? but they say no more, recognising that to such feelings the Lord Himself alone has the key. Not even angels, pure, powerful, sympathetic as they are, can interpose between a seeking soul and Jesus Christ whom it seeks. 14. *And when—Jesus.* Not expecting to see her Lord alive, and in her deep emotion hardly seeing the features of the man behind her, only noticing that there was some one there, Mary might have easily failed to detect who he was. But some change there was in the body of the Lord, as is clear from the various records of His resurrection appearances. It was a body no longer controlled by, but controlling altogether, the ordinary natural forces of this present existence; the same, but with a difference. At pleasure Jesus

15 knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him  
16 away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and  
17 saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith

made Himself visible and invisible; when He appeared it was a "showing" or "manifestation" of Himself, xxi. 1. He was recognised by His disciples not at the first sight of Him on such occasions as He appeared, but after some interval of proof that He whom they saw and conversed with was really the same old Master, with the same personal characteristics as before; and that it was not simply the Master's spirit (or ghost), but the Master with a real body, essentially the same as that which had died on the cross and lay in the tomb. Mary recognised Him here when He threw His whole personality into the tones of His voice pronouncing her name. The two who walked to Emmaus in His company knew Him just as He was in the act of doing what He had often done in their presence before; the disciples fishing on the lake,—when the net enclosed a great multitude of fishes. There was the same personality, there was the same body, with a difference, bearing the marks *to some extent* of the previous earthly existence, but elevated out of that existence, appearing in it at will, using it at will, but not in the least under its power or dependent on its conditions. In the glorified body character will be truthfully expressed, and will be the medium of the recognition of personal identity. 15. *Jesus—away.* Not even the voice of Jesus is recognisable by Mary at the first; but possibly this mode of salutation from Him—"Woman!"—was unusual. *I will take Him away.* Love makes light of every difficulty. Renan ascribes to the enthusiastic love and devotion of Mary Magdalene the first conception of the possibility of a resurrection, and the origin of the belief in the fact. The narrative, if it has any truth in it whatever, precludes the idea. So far was Mary from conjuring up visions of a risen Lord, that she did not recognise Him until He had repeatedly appealed to her. The words, *supposing Him to be the gardener*, dispel all such romantic illusions. 16. *Jesus—Master.* The one word "Mary," her name, spoken with some accent of surprise probably, but with all the tenderness and expressive significance which could come from none but One in all the world, from the One who knew her as none had known her or could know her, the One who had "cast seven devils out of her," and filled her with the spirit of penitence, of holiness, and of God, opened her eyes, and in the instant, with the exclamation, "My Master!" from her lips, and in an excess of joy unspeakable, she had thrown herself at His feet (cp. Matt. xxviii. 9, which in all probability records the same incident, see Mark xvi. 9). *She turned herself*; cp. ver. 14. She had turned away from the angels, and again turned away from the supposed gardener. *Rabboni*, see i. 38. The word *in Hebrew* is added by Westcott and Hort, and adopted by R.V. The addition has some bearing on the question whether Greek or Hebrew was the ordinary language in which Christ and His disciples spoke to one another, favouring the former supposition. At moments of intense excitement or feeling, like the present, the native tongue would be naturally adopted. That Mary was not seized with panic (as were the eleven on that

unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my

same evening when Jesus stood in the midst of them), thinking she saw her Master's disembodied spirit, is parallel with the fact of her apparent lack of surprise on seeing the vision of angels in the tomb. In the minds of the disciples reason struggled with evidence; so that the heart can arrive at sound conclusions sooner than the head. No question as to the possibility of the miracle disturbs Mary as she grasps her Saviour by the feet. The stronger-minded men are unhinged; love triumphs over fear, and doubt, and the impossible. The Lord in His appearance *first* to Mary Magdalene conferred a remarkable honour on women, in admirable consistency with His conduct throughout His ministry; He showed also how great and deep His love is to penitents, and taught a memorable lesson therein to His Church evermore: not to Peter first, or to John, or to His mother, but to a weeping, broken-hearted penitent, absorbed with passionate desire to see His body once again, and pay a last tribute of reverence and undying gratitude; He also recognised that unreasoning affection has claims as well as the reflection of the judgment. On the disciples He does not burst all at once on His departure from the tomb. He permits one proof after another to exercise its due weight, and then appears in the evening, rebuking them for want of faith because they had not, or with much suspiciousness, accepted the evidence of His resurrection. But to Mary Magdalene, whose love, deep and passionate, was a light to itself, the joy, the honour were granted of seeing the Lord immediately after He had risen. "John had love's insight; Mary had the want which love creates. John's insight taught him first to conclude his Lord had risen; Mary's want brought her Lord first to her to satisfy it" (Luthardt). 17. *Jesus—God. Touch me not* [R.V. margin, *Take not hold on me*]. A prohibition which arose, not from the peculiar condition of Christ's risen body, or from any special sanctity attaching to Him now that He was risen, which did not operate before, or from any desire on his part to be more distant and reserved in His fellowship with her and the rest, see ver. 27; Luke xxiv. 39; but simply and obviously from Mary's own state of mind. While holding her Master in the first rapture of joy, she likely thought that the old familiar and daily friendship and communion would be renewed, would be even doubly precious after this painful interval of separation. She thought of nothing but a renewal of the past. It was necessary that she should be undeceived at once, and made to understand, as the mother of Jesus at Cana and at Calvary, that there were new conditions and relations to be thought of, that something in the old life had gone, no more to return. Love to Him should not be less, but reverence and worship more. He adds the reason for this prohibition: *For I am not yet ascended to my [the] Father*. This said that His earthly life was at an end. Hence clinging to Him, to His outward form, to the old, would not detain Him on earth, or on the former footing. Love mingled with ignorance held Him by the feet, would keep His feet, as it were, ever walking on the earth. And He says, Do not cling to my bodily form; this ignorance must be put away. I ascend to the Father. Yet the love must not be put away, for when I am ascended to that Divine fellowship which includes my brethren also, no expression of love and desire towards me will be distasteful. While He repels, for the present and in this form, He holds out a great and glorious hope that the friendship and communion resumed on these higher conditions will be all that they ever have been, and infinitely more. When

Father : but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father ; and *to* my God, and your  
 18 God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* he had spoken these things unto her.

every partial view of Him is lost in the flood of glory opened out by the Spirit, there should be no limit to the closeness and preciousness of the soul's fellowship with Him. The Lord, therefore, negatives the former friendship, and at the same time promises a higher, more wonderful, kind and degree of friendship. We are nearer Him by faith now than Mary Magdalene was then when she grasped His feet. It was the same truth taught the disciples a few days before—"If I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you." Perhaps we may discover in these words a rebuke to that peculiar form of superstition which indulges in material, carnal views of the risen Lord : crucifixes, and the child Jesus in Mary's bosom, and startlingly vivid representations of the Redeemer's sufferings, to the counting of the drops of blood that fell from His wounds : what are these but an ignorant clinging to His feet, to that earthwardness which has all gone, instead of the effort to realize the spiritual which has taken its place? *But go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father ; and to my God, and your God.* Cling not selfishly to me, but go to impart this gladness of yours to others. Jesus might suggest in the words a lesson for future life, as He did to His mother from His cross, xix. 26. She followed the great Teacher and hung on His lips before, and watched every opportunity for serving Him, showing her love and gratitude. But now let her tell to others and in her own way the love, and grace, and mercy which have done so much for her. By the words, *My brethren* (Matt. xxviii. 10), Jesus no doubt meant that He was the same to them as ever ; and not the same only, but more. His death for them had made them, if possible, nearer and dearer than ever. He had never called them "brethren" before. He had spoken of them as *servants* and *friends* ; but now, when they might have least expected it, when they might have imagined a barrier between Him and them, and that He had other and greater interests than they, He calls them by a name which would dispel all such suspicion and fear—"My brethren." That this involves a nearer relationship goes without saying, as the consequence of His completed work ; for having now gone through the full experience of human life and death, He could not but be our Brother in a sense not realized before. Less by His birth into our flesh than by His death in it for us does Jesus claim brotherhood with us, for in His death He felt what we feel, having to deal with God alone : He stood then in the gap and made up the hedge for us. Hence His kindredness with us is closer in and through His death than in His taking flesh and blood (cp. Ps. xxii. 22). Angels said to the women, He is not here, He is risen ! Christ Himself said, I ascend ! (Remark these words, especially since John gives no account of the visible ascension at last.) His ascension did not begin at the Mount of Olives that day He led the disciples out to witness His departure : it began when He was quickened in the Spirit ; and His resurrection was but part of His ascension. So He says, I ascend ! The detention on earth for forty days was for His disciples' sake, that they might be persuaded He had risen, and encouraged for their future toil. His heart was already at the

19 Then the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the

right hand of God, and but for the needs of His Church the power by which He rose would have seated Him already in the heavenlies. Was it not also designed that His first salutation to His disciples after He was risen should announce a second departure; reminding them of the mysterious words spoken in the upper room about going to the Father? It would tend to break them off from carnal hopes regarding their Master's new risen condition; from conceptions of a kingdom and glory here which, destroyed by the crucifixion, might strike root again when they heard of the resurrection. Angels say He has come back. Jesus says He goes away again. If their first thought might be one of regret that He had appeared only to dash their hopes again and leave them, their next impression would be that they were concerned in His going as greatly as Himself, if His Father were to be their Father, and His God their God, and theirs *because* His. By calling them "Brethren," He assures them they are personally at least as much to Him as ever, and even more. By calling His God and Father theirs, He assures them that His work is still on their behalf where He goes. He had by life and death brought them into the true abiding relation of sons to His Father and God. These words in a sense complete Christ's Revelation. Not *His* Father and God alone summons Him, but theirs also. He went where they could not be forgotten. And they would remember what He had already told them, that if He would go, He would come again and receive them to Himself. One half of that promise was about to be fulfilled—He was going to the Father. The other would also be fulfilled. Meanwhile, that He had come back to them here was not the subject to which He called their thoughts, great as it was: that they were now brothers of Him who had conquered Death, and that they were the sons of a Divine Father, sons of God—Christ's God, were the wonderful new truths they should ponder. [If, as we suppose, the incident recorded in Matt. xxviii. 9, 10 is the same as this, our Lord had added the words which are given there: Tell my brethren that they go before me—to Galilee: there shall they see me! The apparent contradiction in the fact that He was seen of them the same evening in Jerusalem, may be accounted for through their slowness of heart to believe in His resurrection; see Luke xxiv. 41; Mark xvi. 14.] 18. *Mary—her.* (R.V. puts Mary's information direct—I have seen the Lord.) Mark xvi. 9, 10; Luke xxiv. 10.

(3.) 19–29. The Lord's two appearances to His disciples in Jerusalem. Between these and the foregoing appearance to Mary Magdalene must be placed our Lord's appearance to Simon, Luke xxiv. 34, cp. 1 Cor. xv. 5, and the memorable journey to Emmaus, recorded also in Luke xxiv. The first appearance, vers. 19–23. This is recorded also by Luke (xxiv. 36 ff.). 19. *Then—you.* Were the disciples only using precaution? or had they reason to believe there were plots to surprise them? This latter would be supported by the consternation which must have spread among them after hearing the report of the Roman watch, Matt. xxviii. 11 ff. The house may have been that referred to in Acts i. 13. Luke tells us that the "eleven were gathered together, and them that were with them." *The doors being shut*; see remarks on ver. 14. Jesus came among them in such a way as to prove that new laws now ruled His body—that the earthly no longer

20 midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them *his* hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.  
 21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my*  
 22 Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye

was a limitation to it. The spiritual in the man Christ Jesus had assumed complete control over the material. There was still a material element in Christ's personality, but it was independent of all ordinary laws relating to matter and force. The body of our Lord was therefore a spiritual, transfigured, glorified body. He was still man in integrity, even wearing the traces of His earthly career, proving the identity of His person by the scars of crucifixion, as well as the substantiality of His body by asking to be handled. But He was no longer a living soul under the restriction and curse of Adamic descent. He was a quickening spirit, the "second man," the "Lord from heaven." We need not form theories, but simply take note of the facts as here set before us; for our conceptions of the future spiritual body are necessarily formed from those appearances of the risen Saviour. *Peace be unto you!* A word out of the fulness of His own risen life. He had Himself passed from the state of sorrow, suffering, self-sacrifice, agony and shame, into the eternal peace of heaven. So He comes to His own to give them fulfilment of His promise, xiv. 27. And it was no mere formal or even friendly greeting. Fittingly the words came from the lips of Him who is "our Peace," who had first made peace for men with God through the blood of His cross. Back from the bitterness of death He came with peace on His lips as His message of reconciling mercy to all mankind. 20. *And—Lord. His hands and His side.* To convince them He was the very same person who had been crucified, having the same Body; as the words just uttered would assure them His heart was still the same to them. The action recorded in Luke xxiv. 39, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself," bears rather on the fact that He had still a *body*; that He was not simply *spirit*, but had a material element, however altered, in His personality. *Glad* (cp. Luke xxiv. 41, "They believed not for joy, and wondered"). 21. *Then—you. Again.* The repetition of the salutation marks it as something greater than a wish, marks it as a positive Divine equipment: the gift of grace to them, *first*, as sinners needing to have, and to know they have, peace with God; and, *second*, as apostles about to go into the world and proclaim peace to them who were afar off and to them who were nigh. *As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you*, xv. 16 and xvii. 18. The Lord gives them formally and authoritatively the commission to preach Him to the world. They are sent by Him for the same *purpose*, and with the same *authority*, and with the like *endowments*, as He had been sent by the Father. Their work continues His work. It is the Divine proclamation of peace with God through Jesus Christ to all men, the beseeching of sinners to be reconciled to God: a message from the Father to His lost children. The disciples would realize that the work of their Master before His death, which seemed to have collapsed, was to be carried forward by them. Jesus was not a new Saviour. He had not lost hold of the past life which He led. The interests, hopes, plans, objects, all were the same. 22 f. *And when—retained. He breathed on them*, etc.; cp.

23 the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; *and* whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained.

24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not

Ezek. xxxvii. 9. His very breath conveyed to them the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is represented in Scripture as the Breath of God—which, indeed, the word Spirit itself means. He is the breathing of God—the essence and life of God, breathed by Father to Son, and by Father and Son to men. Breathing is the most manifest token of life ; so that, in breathing on the disciples, our Lord was giving them to share His own life—the life of God. He was so possessed with the Spirit that the very breath of His body was spiritual—communicating Divine life. He had not done this before, though the Father had given Him the Spirit without measure, iii. 34. He had not permitted men to think He had a magical influence about His person that might dispense with the need for intelligent, personal faith. His earthly nature, too, imposed a check on the manifestation of the fulness of Divine life. But now the earthliness was gone : the life of the spirit had overflowed His body—had become its breath ; the life of the Divine nature was now so inspired into the human nature that the human nature itself, its breath, had life-giving power. The act was also the exercise of the powers of Almighty God. As Creator, He breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life at the first, and man became a living soul. And now He breathed on His disciples as Redeemer ; Himself the Glorified Man, the Quickening Spirit, giving life, and life more abundantly to overcome the death of sin. Without Him—His direct personal influence—there is no life in the soul. This private act of Christ, before His ascension, would convince His disciples all the more that the public outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was truly His own gift to the Church, His own very life, was no mere external equipment, was no alien power—nothing new, strange, unknown, but the symbol of the great fact that they henceforth lived in their Lord's life ; cp. xiv. 19, "Because I live, ye shall live also." *Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.* Our Lord gave the disciples first their *work*, then the needful *endowment* for it, and now *authority* in the carrying of it out. Their work was to go into the world to preach the Divine peace which they had themselves received from their Lord. Their endowment was the Holy Spirit bringing them into union and communion with the life of Father and Son. Their authority in executing it, power to forgive or retain sins. In this remarkable gift there is implied the institution of the Church of Christ as a visible, organized society, with its methods of procedure, laws, office-bearers, and discipline. Our Lord had already made the same promise of authority to them, Matt. xvi. 19, xviii. 18, in a form taken from the rules of the synagogue communions. "Binding" and "loosing" were familiar terms applied to the discipline exercised by the elders of synagogues over the members. The disciples therefore would understand that their Master was calling them to organize a society on earth of those believing in His name, and to exercise all needful discipline in connection with it—to determine who should, and who should not, be within its fellowship. It is implied, further, that their fellowship shall be a fellowship of those who have had their sins forgiven, who enjoy that peace with the Father which He had just declared to themselves. The *second* appearance, vers. 24-29, peculiar to John. 24. Thomas, called Didymus (twin), mentioned in xi. 16 and

- 25 with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.
- 26 And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them : *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut,
- 27 and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you. Then

xiv. 5, on which see. Perhaps it was owing to the extreme melancholy and dejection, characteristic of this disciple, that he was not with the rest on that first evening. He may have heard the report of his Master's resurrection, but rejected it ; and did not think it worth his while to meet with the others in consequence. Despondency punishes itself—does not see the Lord when He may be seen. 25. *The other—believe. But he said,* etc. Despondency becomes want of faith, not only in God, but also in man. Was Thomas so absolutely sure of the trustworthiness of the evidence of his own senses, that he could afford to set aside the evidence of the senses of ten brethren, who were as reliable as himself ? The fact was remarkable, it is true ; but which was more likely, that they were all deceived, or conspiring to deceive their brother, or that the fact was as they asserted ? Then how could Thomas so impugn in his own mind the memory of the Master ? Did all that wonderful past communion with Him go for nothing ? Was there nothing to suggest that if such a remarkable end were true, it would only be the fit termination to such a life ? Despondency thus becomes arrogant, becomes also unreasonable in its demands. We have no right to say : Only such an amount or kind of proof will satisfy our minds. It is our duty to keep our minds open to any light which God gives : to accept what God gives, and judge it as it comes ; and to keep our hearts free from the darkness of prejudice and all emotional agitations. If every one should require the same sort of evidence of Christ's resurrection, the Church could make no progress. Men are in the habit of using something resembling these words, when they demand what they call scientific proofs of Christ's resurrection,—what would satisfy an enlightened committee of learned men, capable of sifting evidence and forming an impartial judgment. They ask for this or that condition ; and it is obvious that no sign will ever be given them. *The print [type] of the nails.* Thomas does not speak of Christ's *feet*—simply the *hands* and *side*, see Luke xxiv. 40. 26. *And—you. After eight days.* As the message from the risen Lord through the angels to the disciples was a command to go to Galilee where they should see Him (of which, however, John says nothing, nor Luke), see Matt. xxviii. and Mark xvi., it is permissible to conjecture that the Lord in His first appearance to the eleven on the evening of His resurrection day may have requested them to remain in the city until the close of the Passover festivities, which lasted a week, and then to meet Him in Galilee. He, however, who would not, on His first introduction by the Jordan to His disciples, go forth into Galilee without finding timid, hesitating Philip, had now His own loving purpose with regard to His desponding but loyal-hearted disciple. It may have been our Lord's intention to put honour on the day on which He rose by once again appearing on it to the disciples, marking it out as the day of Christian worship. It was

saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands ; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust *it* into my side : 28 and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered

probably the day on which the Passover celebrations ended. Our Lord's abstention from appearing to them for the whole week may have been with the object of affording them that period for calm reflection on the stupendous event in the light of O. T. prophecy, now clothed with a new meaning, and of the many significant utterances of their Master, unintelligible when spoken. The Lord would not hurry them to conclusions by being personally present. Besides, had He resided with them continually, the suspicions of the Sanhedrim would have been excited. *Where* Jesus lived during this time is answered by recalling the nature of the existence into which resurrection of the body brought Him. 27. *Then—believing.* John's record of the Divine Lord is consistent with itself. The person is the same throughout. He who, at the beginning of His ministry, surprised Nathanael, when he first came to see the Christ, with the knowledge of his private life and character, is He who at the close of His ministry shows Himself cognizant of a disciple's doubts, without having been informed of them by man. And He, who gently disarmed Nathanael of his prejudices by his generous reception, and ascription to him of a guileless character, is He who now, in loving condescension to the weakness of Thomas, offers him the very evidences of sense without which the disciple had refused to believe in the resurrection of his Master. *Reach hither*, etc. Jesus said nothing to wound or upbraid Thomas. He was a "bruised reed," which the Lord would not break. 28. *And Thomas—God.* A full confession of Jesus as the same Lord as He who died on the cross ; and therefore confession of faith in the resurrection and in the Godhead of Christ. The testimony of others is a sufficient ground for belief, so far as it is a question of fact that is before us, the competency and credibility of the witness being taken into account. The testimony of others may be a sort of temporary tie between us and the things believed ; for absolute certainty of faith we must be brought into direct communion with Christ Himself through His Spirit's witness. "He that believeth hath the witness in himself." We are asked, How can you now verify the fact of the resurrection ? It is said to have happened long ago : the witnesses may have been deceived, unconsciously untrustworthy ; the Gospel records were written long after the event ; the various accounts of the resurrection in them are fragmentary and difficult to reconcile. We answer : The trustworthiness of apostolic testimony can be proved by those who have the means of examining the external evidences ; but that testimony is always bearing witness in these pages to every reader. There is not one in a thousand who can search into the outward evidences for the fact of Christ's resurrection. There is no need : that resurrection does not come to us as an outward fact of history alone,—detached from human need, hope, desire, prediction, and the like ; it comes as the answer of God to men's deepest needs : to the hunger and thirst of the soul for deliverance from sin and death ; it moves in the lines of personal aspirations and prophecies, fulfilling them ; and it meets us to-day as we urge the immemorial plaint ; faith in the resurrection of Jesus has connections with all life's realities, there is a concurrent testimony to it, so that we can say the death and resurrection of Christ are the interpretation of our deepest needs, and the fulfilment of our hopes and of the world's. A fact may appear most unaccountable in itself, but, when taken along with a series of other

phenomena, it may become not only credible, but actually the key to the whole. The spotless life, the unique life of his Master, might have made it easier for Thomas to believe in some such remarkable close. The resurrection, not standing alone but together with all that was experienced of Christ's power and wonderfulness, became luminous. Unbelief is often due to our looking at some single difficulty by itself, instead of endeavouring to see how it stands in relation to the larger horizon of truth besides ; much of which truth we never question, but act on. We are richer in proofs pointing to God by Christ if we would only be diligent in looking for them. The sort of proof Thomas desired was neither the most convincing nor the most elevating in its results. Suppose it given, what hindered doubt still whether some deception did not exist? A disciple would look at something higher, to discover if it were not the very same Friend as ever, the same tender heart, the same gracious utterance. The finger might be put into the print of the nails, and the heart and mind be unimpressed, unconvinced. It was uniformly to higher evidence Jesus strove to raise the twelve. We have a tendency to seek such outward assurances of faith and hope ; and there are times when we would rather trust a voice speaking from heaven than the secret witness of the Spirit. And the cry for certitude, for a sign from heaven, springs from a state of mind that cannot estimate the most powerful evidence when laid before it. We need not climb to heaven, nor dig into the depths. The word is nigh—nearer than we think. Faith is not a thing of more or less, a heaping up of proofs ; it is a state of soul. It is, even as a grain of mustard seed, capable of great achievements. It does not appear whether Thomas put his finger and hand into the scars and wound or not. As it is not mentioned, we may gather that the presence and the loving consideration of the Lord so overwhelmed him that faith shot up in his soul on the instant,—stronger, truer, more solid than faith born of touch and sense. The proofs we seek may in a moment be rendered needless, even childish, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit revealing the person of our Lord to the heart. Even while Thomas touched Christ's body unbelievingly or doubtingly, Christ might have withheld the spiritual influence without which the external contact would have been fruitless for the soul. All that unbelievers ask for might be granted, say, in some demonstration of miracle ; but repentance, faith, the becoming as little children, might not follow. The power of Christ rests where it has ever rested : "we are made partakers of Christ's redemption by the effectual application of it to us through His Holy Spirit." The evangelist makes this confession of the desponding disciple the climax of his argument. The confession was weightier coming from him than had it come from himself or from Peter. The doubts, difficulties, fears of the least sanguine, of the man readiest to apprehend calamity and ruin, were so entirely removed, that the fullest confession of the Lordship and Godhead of the Lord Jesus Christ came from him. It was important that among the disciples there should be one of such a disposition, in order that Christ's way of dealing with him might become a lesson to the Church. John and Peter might be apt to lose patience with Thomas ; might tell him that the Master would not be acting wisely to give him all he wished. They did not know how Christ can convince a man of his folly and unbelief, and draw him into trust out of his weakness and errors by offering him all he desires. Christ's infinite love and patience conquered Thomas' suspicions and fears. The Church of Christ should be the reflection of Him who offered His hands and side to a weak disciple to inspire faith ; a refuge for the ignorant and them

29 and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed : blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed.

that are out of the way. There is a faithlessness born of lack of hope. Jesus calls it faithlessness, but deals tenderly with it. If Jesus had ridiculed Thomas, there had been one conquest the less for the faith, and the sublime confession which we appropriate in our hours of intensest emotion had never been uttered. But if in this great confession of Thomas, a confession of faith in the risen Saviour, of acceptance of Him as personal Lord—Lord of Life, and of belief in His Godhead, we have presented to us Him in His fulness who is the object of faith, the sum and substance of the gospel, it is well that we have side by side our Lord's own statement of the grounds on which faith in Himself may rest. 29. *Jesus—believed.* Severity was required, at least a reproof or warning as well as gentleness, and for the sake of all subsequent ages of the Church. If men were all and always to demand like conditions for faith, how could truth prevail? If Thomas were to pass unrebuked, the very gentleness would be misconstrued. Therefore he is told that the conditions he had demanded were such as took a lower rank in the scale of certitude and of blessedness. This is in accordance with the whole tenor of this Gospel ; for Jesus is ever presented to us as lifting His disciples up above the merely outward and visible,—the miraculous work, the wonder,—and throwing them back on the evidences which are moral and spiritual. Such conditions as Thomas required, therefore, are unnecessary in order to have true and intelligent faith. Thomas himself ought to have believed in the testimony of the rest, confirmed by all he had known and experienced of Christ in past days. Certainty cannot be too clear ; but certainty does not depend on evidence of sight and sense. Our Lord does not mean that faith has not its solid reasons, or that the less evidence we have for our belief the more blessed we are if we do believe. He does not mean that to believe much is better than to believe little. That depends on the object of our faith. Credulousness is as objectionable as unbelief. Both spring from the same root. The heart has its reasons, and faith has its evidence. Faith is not submission to authority that demands our conscience. Faith is not blind acceptance of truth. Faith is not the opposite of reason. No man believes without intelligent grounds for his belief. Faith is the opposite of sight, because it asserts what is not seen ; the opposite of reason *in this sense*, that it compels belief in an object which reason alone cannot apprehend. But faith in the unseen has its own proofs, which satisfy the believing mind and heart that there is an unseen and eternal. Our Lord does not call us to believe in Him on less substantial or plain evidence than would convince us in other matters. The proof to the believing heart and mind that Jesus is risen—is Lord of life and is God—is more convincing than the proof that there is a material world lying before the cognition of our outward senses ; see I John v. 9—end. We cannot meet with the risen Saviour now—He has gone to the right hand of God ; but in place, we have the testimony of the apostles in this Gospel record ; and that, with the promised aid and testimony of the Holy Spirit both there and in our own spirits, is solid ground of belief for all the world. Our Lord's words are wide. They reach out comfort to all who are deprived of their ordinary sources of spiritual consolation, who cannot find in the promises of Scripture what once they found ; who crave for personal

30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of  
 31 his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these  
 are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the  
 Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through  
 his name.

assurance something of an outward kind—a putting the finger into the print of the nail. Blessed are such who, in absence of all their comforting views of truth and of Christ Himself, tossed on stormy seas of doubt or darkness, yet believe.

(4.) 30, 31. **Conclusion and scope of the Gospel record.** The evangelist, having reached this point, feels naturally that he need go no farther. He has shown how the most desponding man among them not only believed that his Lord was risen, but even uttered faith in Him as God; and adding the Lord's own comment on this confession, to show what are the true and normal conditions of faith evermore, now that Jesus has ascended to heaven, he concludes. He feels that he has come to the goal for which he set out; that he has established the fact which he asserted, that the Word, which was in the beginning with God, and was God, was made flesh and tabernacled among us, and that men beheld His glory, full of grace and truth. 30. *Many—book.* *Signs*, see on ii. 11. Not proofs of His resurrection merely, for the resurrection itself was one of the *signs* by which He is known to be *the Christ, the Son of God*. The evangelist, therefore, proceeded by way of selection. The principle ruling his selection from the many unrecorded incidents and utterances follows in ver. 31. He must have felt that for this purpose he could plead and depend on the promised aid of the Spirit of his Lord, as for the work of teaching and preaching. Without adopting any stringent theory of inspiration, we may be sure that John regarded this “book” as a “record” given by God to men concerning His Son, 1 John v. 10. 31. *But—name.* The scope and object of his book is to produce faith in the Christhood and Godhead of Jesus, and so to procure life in Christ's name to him who believes. He has written, as he would preach, to convert men to the Son of God. And he has presented such aspects of Christ, His person and work, as he considers sufficient to elicit faith. If the reader will duly attend, he must be convinced and believe. He does not demand faith without laborious proof. But the proof is enough. If the alternative of disbelief be *death*, it is not a mere matter of individual judgment whether one believes or not. Belief is compulsory, unbelief is criminal. The two great facts in Jesus are, (1) that He fulfils the past promises of the Old Testament, that He is indeed the promised Messiah of the Jews; and (2) that He is the personal revelation of God the Father to all mankind. Round these two points John constructs his evangelic record. Jesus is, accordingly, the fulfiller of the word, and the satisfier of the deep eternal cravings of the human heart for the vision of the Father, and for an assured relation in love and peace to the Father. *Life.* A mere intellectual faith was nothing. He has not written a mere piece of history from historic interest. It is the faith that brings life to dying men which John had in view (1 John v. 12); the faith which unites men to Christ Himself, as branches to the vine, He in them, and they in Him. It is the faith which makes men sons of God in Christ's Sonship; the faith which is essentially

CHAP. XXI. 1. After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias ; and on this wise shewed  
 2 he *himself*. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the  
 3 sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship

a being born of God, a sharing the life of the Father and of the Son. Life is in Christ (or in Christ's *name*) alone ; and faith is the channel through which it is received into the heart ; and faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

## V. EPILOGUE—APPEARANCE IN GALILEE—SIMON PETER RESTORED TO OFFICE, CH. XXI.

CH. XXI. It is probable that the evangelist intended the closing verses of ch. xx. to end his book. This chapter, which bears traces of having been an appendix to the original writing, either by John himself or by a disciple (who evidently wrote ver. 24 at least), records a third appearance of Jesus to His disciples by the Lake of Galilee, when He formally reinstated Peter in the office of apostle, which by denial of the Lord had been forfeited, morally at least, and foretold the future of Peter and John. (1) 1-14. The appearance of Christ by the Lake. (2) 15-19. Peter's restoration and future. (3) 20-23. John's future. (4) 24 f. Epilogue. The Gospel ends, as it began, with Jesus and His disciples.

(1.) 1-14. The appearance of Christ by the Lake. The disciples had followed their Lord's instructions, and left Jerusalem for Galilee, Matt. xxviii. 16, where in the comparative retirement Jesus might more safely have such fellowship with them as was necessary before His final departure from the world. 1. *After—Himself.* *After these things*, see on v. 1. *Show[ed]* *[manifested]* *Himself*, see on xx. 14. His appearances after the resurrection were of the nature of revelations. He belonged no longer to the earthly life. 2. *There—disciples.* Seven in all. *Of Cana in Galilee.* Nathanael's call is given in i. 45 ff., but his residence is not mentioned there. The designation would suit either one well known to belong to Cana, or one not so well known generally. Who the *two others* were we can only conjecture. Andrew, perhaps, and Philip, who were both of Bethsaida, i. 44. 3. *Simon—nothing.* Peter ever takes the initiative. Weary of waiting, possibly, for the Master who never comes, impatient of idleness, perhaps feeling the burden of old memories and associations by that lake somewhat unbearable, in present uncertainty, Peter determines to do something to break the monotony and relieve the suspense. Even a turn at the old trade will be a welcome diversion, though it had once been abandoned for ever. To pull the oar or haul the net will be better than doing nothing, and eating out the heart with vain regrets. And so he starts up exclaiming that he is to wait no longer, he can endure this suspense no more. *I go a fishing!* Something of the old, unchastened impulse spoke out in those words, and that must be subdued ; for he who cannot wait when the Master bids him is not worthy to be an apostle, any more than he who

- 4 immediately ; and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore : but  
 5 the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat ? They answered  
 6 him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore ; and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.  
 7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now, when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt *his* fisher's coat *unto him*, (for he was naked,) and

will not leave boat and nets and all at the higher call. Peter will find that a fisherman may become an apostle, but an apostle cannot become a fisherman. *A ship* ; rather *the boat*, as in R.V. ; so *the little boat*, ver. 8. Also omit *immediately*. *That night they caught nothing*. This word for *caught* is one of John's frequent expressions, vii. 30, 32, 44, viii. 20, x. 39, xi. 57. As the hours passed in the unprofitable toil, Simon may have had occasion to reflect on the mood of impulse and impatience that sent him out on the lake, and to consider that he could not run away from the will of God, or hasten it. Did he think also of that former night on this lake when they caught nothing, followed by the eventful day when at Christ's call they relinquished all, and went after Him to be fishers of men ? And did he wonder that once more he was on that lake at his old toil again ? and did he begin to construe their bad success as the message in symbol from the Master, whose will they knew could be written on the winds and waves of that lake, that this was not the place or the work for them ? (See Thomson's *The Land and the Book*, p. 402.) 4. *But—Jesus*. Jesus was within hail, see ver. 8, and therefore, as in the case of Mary (xx. 14), some other cause for failure to recognise Him than distance must be thought of. 5. *Then—No. Children* ; rather *lads*, found nowhere else except i John ii. 13, 18. The word in vi. 9 is a diminutive of this. *Meat*, lit. something to eat with bread ; German, *Zukost*. The question anticipates an answer in the negative. 6. *And—fishes* ; cp. the previous miracle, Luke v. 4-7. "The water is sweet and wholesome, and the fish abundant and of an excellent quality. They are, however, but little troubled by either hook, net, or spear" (*The Land and the Book*, p. 401). *Draw*, vi. 44, xii. 32, xviii. 10 ; elsewhere only once. 7. *Therefore—sea. It is the Lord*. Recollections were awakened in John's breast : the sound of Christ's voice, the remarkable occurrence, and its resemblance to what once happened before, and besides that inexplicable drawing of love to its beloved object, all combined in an instant to flash the truth into his mind. *Now, when Simon Peter*, etc. The characters of the two men are told in a sentence ; as before, xx. 6-8 : John's insight of love, and Peter's impetuous energy ; cp. Matt. xiv. 28 ff. *His fisher's coat*, which was either loosely round him, or more probably which had been laid aside as an encumbrance in his work, while he was still clothed with a light under-garment. An instinctive act of reverence. "Here in this hot climate, however, it is common to fish with nothing but a sort of shawl or napkin tied round the waist. The fisher's coat which he girt about him was the short 'abāyeh' which they now wear, and which they very often lay aside while fishing. They can doff

- 8 did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship, (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.
- 9 As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of  
10 coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.
- 11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three : and for all there were  
12 so many, yet was not the net broken. Jesus saith unto them, Come *and* dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him,  
13 Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish like-  
14 wise. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples after that he was risen from the dead.

and don it in a moment. When worn, it is girt tight about the loins with the *zunnar*, and Peter did this when hastening to meet the Lord" (*The Land and the Book*, p. 403). 8. *And—fishes*. It is well that all disciples have not the same characteristics, for then the work of God would fail. We admire and even yield the chief place, where we would never dream of imitating. Peter must not charge the rest with lack of enthusiasm, while they need not charge him with extravagance. Christ can bind together all the struggling winds of human character, holding them in check, and using them for one purpose, as Æolus did the winds of heaven in his bag; and none but Christ. *Two hundred cubits*: a cubit =  $1\frac{3}{4}$  English feet, so that the distance was more than three hundred feet from shore. *A little ship*; rather, as in R.V., *the little boat*. "There is but one small boat on the lake, and this is generally out of repair" (*The Land and the Book*, p. 403).<sup>1</sup> 9. *As—bread*. Where this fire and the fish and bread came from must be answered by asking, Where the Lord Himself came from? 10. *Jesus—caught*. Jesus had provided for them, and they too must provide for themselves and for Him. To explain that the quantity was not enough for all, is to be singularly insensible to the significance of the whole incident; comp. Rev. iii. 20, "I will sup with him, and he with me." 11. *Simon—broken*. *Went up*, i.e. on board the boat. 12. *Jesus—Lord*. *Dine*; rather *breakfast*. *None—durst ask*, etc. An ingenuous admission, guaranteeing authenticity. There is implied that the disciples, or some of them at least, would fain have put the question, not at all because they were suspicious of the identity of Jesus, but simply to have the gratification of hearing it answered in the affirmative. They were withheld by their very reverence, and the fear of appearing to their Master to doubt. They remembered their former reproof (Mark xvi. 14), and kept silence. 13. *Jesus—likewise*, Luke xxiv. 30, and ch. vi. 11. 14. *This—dead*. *The third time*. John says nothing of Christ's appearance to Peter (Luke xxiv. 34; 1 Cor. xv. 5), nor does he reckon Christ's appearance to Mary, which, however, he records. Writing, as he did, when men were requiring substantial, reliable proofs of

<sup>1</sup> The writer had the privilege of inspecting, a few days ago [July 1888], in the yard of Messrs. D. & W. Henderson & Co., Glasgow, the admirable boat just built for the Tiberias Mission of the Free Church of Scotland.

15 So, when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He

the fact, it was more important to lay emphasis on those appearances which Christ granted to all the apostles—or at least to the greater part of them—together. The temptation to regard this incident as symbolical seems to be all but irresistible, and probably need not be resisted—to some extent at least. It is unavoidable to compare it with the miraculous draught of fishes at the beginning of Christ's ministry (Luke v. 1 ff.), especially since there as here prominence is given to Simon Peter. Considerable favour is shown still to Augustine's interpretation, which contrasts the two incidents as setting forth the work of the Church of Christ during the present dispensation of grace, and then at the end of the world. All the differing details are pressed into the service of this view, which in some respects has much to recommend it. It is probable that the disciples themselves, Peter most of all, would come to regard the whole occurrence as significant in relation to their future work. Such obvious suggestions would be impressed on them: apostles must wait on the will of their Lord, and not run without being sent; they can have no success in their spiritual labour unless Christ is with them, and sanctioning by His presence and directing by His Spirit their working; the word of their Lord is the sure and infallible guide in all they do, and if obeyed, will bring success beyond their expectations. The results of their labours—labours often in the dark—are certain, and not only so, but precisely known to Him whose work they are doing, results numbered with Divine accuracy; and He who sends them on His work is so powerful as to be able to secure results even without their help, and yet so gracious as to depend on their aid, sharing with them the rewards which are all of grace, and yet which crown their lives with the natural and merited harvests of seed sown by themselves. Possibly also they should read in the remarkable similarity to the previous miracle the fact that their Master was the same as ever, His work and purpose the same, His power the same, no poorer and no weaker than before, doing just as much as before, as wonderful, as loving, as thoughtful, fulfilling every hope and promise which He ever made, doing abundantly above all we could ask or think; His calling of them the same; that in the end all planned out in the beginning should be achieved; that the death and resurrection were not deviations of the stream of their Lord's intentions and labours, but the ordained channel by which their goal should be reached.

(2.) 15-19. Simon Peter's restoration and future. It will be borne in mind that Simon must have been personally assured of the Lord's forgiveness and restoration of him to the office of apostle, which he had forfeited, in the private interview, of which we know nothing except the fact (Luke xxiv. 34; 1 Cor. xv. 5). The loving and thoughtful message, Mark xvi. 7, had prepared him for what followed. But as the denial of his Lord was in public, and was known to all the disciples, it was fitting that his restoration to full apostolic office and privilege be also public. 15. *So*—*lamb.* *Dined*; "breakfasted" rather, as in ver. 12. *Simon, son of John*; see i. 42. The words would recall his first introduction to Jesus. *Lovest thou me more than these?* On the two words rendered *to love* in this section, *agapan* and *philein*,—love of esteem and honour, and love of personal friendship,—the former used by Jesus in the first two questions, the latter in the third, and by

saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.

Simon in all the three answers, see on xi. 5. Simon had boasted in the upper room, "Though all shall be offended, yet will not I," Mark xiv. 29, Matt. xxvi. 33; and Jesus asks him if he is still prepared to say the same,—claiming a love stronger than that of the others. We might think it ungenerous to recall such words—better let them drop out of mind. Perhaps so; had Peter's boast been mere vanity, and nothing more, or Christ's intention not suffused with love. Knowing how true at heart His disciple was, the Lord gave him the opportunity, painful in some respects as it was, of uttering his deepest feelings and convictions. It is the kindest thing at times to let the past be untouched. But things we cannot bear to look at again in the light of God's judgment and our own forgiveness are not dead. He who saw in Simon at the first the man of rock, though far enough as yet from the steadfastness to be gained through pain and trial, saw in the boast of fidelity a love deep and enduring. And no one after this authoritative word of Christ could ever taunt Simon with the way he had discredited the Lord. It is Christ's way with every penitent. The life is laid bare, not to confound us merely, but to convince us that nothing escapes the eye of God, and that His judgment is none the less searching that the tenderness of Divine mercy goes with it. Jesus did not say, Simon, art thou ashamed—grieved? readier *now* to believe my word? ready to confess and apologise to us all? The Lord leaves that to others to do, and to the man himself. And His way is to strike through to the deepest stratum of feeling. Love to Him carries all else with it—repentance, faith, energy of obedience and service. *Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee.* Observe the emphasis on the second personal pronoun (as also in vers. 16, 17), meaning, No need to put that question. Lord, *Thou* knowest without my answering. Stronger and humbler than had he said, I hope I do. He will not now rest on his own knowledge of himself: that is discarded, but he will trust Christ's knowledge of him. The true penitent clings to his pardoning God with a tenderer affection than before. Also Simon is silent as to the relative strength of his love and that of his brother disciples. *Feed my lambs* [lit. *little lambs*]. Restoration of Simon to his office as apostle, cp. Luke v. 10. But Jesus was not only restoring him to office, but giving important directions about its fulfilment. To love Him was the one great qualification for the ministerial work to which he was sent. Knowledge is much, but love is more—is indispensable. Simon's knowledge had been tested before, Matt. xvi. 16, now his love. Knowledge may never lead to love; love must lead to knowledge, and the deepest. Love alone qualifies for an office, apostolic or less important. Forgiven, we love; forgiven much, we love much. Once Simon said, "Depart from me, I am a sinful man, O Lord;" but not till now did he know how sinful he was in the light of the love that had forgiven and restored him, and therefore not till now did he know what reason he had to love his Lord. Hence the proper evidence of his love to the Lord should be seen in his tender care for the weak "little lambs" of the Lord's flock. He would deal gently, as he had been gently dealt with himself; he would restore as he had been restored, love as he had been loved. Love to Christ and the sense of His love to us open our hearts to our fellow-men. Being pardoned, we tell of pardon to them also. "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." The love of Christ to us, in its tenderness, constancy, patience, we reflect on them. "I prayed to God that He would baptize my heart into the sense of all conditions,

- 16 He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.
- 17 He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the

so that I might be able to enter into the needs and sorrows of all" (George Fox). Formerly the Lord said to him, "From henceforth thou shalt catch men," Luke v. 10. Now He says, *Feed my little lambs* [*my little sheep*, vers. 16, 17]. The difference is instructive; the one is the end, the other is the means to the end. Possibly also it fitted in with Simon's feelings. Did he shrink from being a fisher of men as unworthy? At least he could do some service for a little lamb—some humble, watchful shepherding. We attain the greater through the less; we are not worthy of doing the greater until we feel how unworthy we are even to do the less. "Restore me the joy of thy salvation . . . then will I teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee," Ps. li. 12, 13. 16. *He saith—sheep. Feed*, rather *tend*, as R.V., or *shepherd*. *Sheep*, or *little sheep*; so in ver. 17. Note the omission in the second and third questions of *more than these*. This great question is repeated, not because Jesus doubted His disciple's word or affection, but because Peter had thrice denied the Lord, and must three times openly and explicitly roll back the imputation of faithlessness. It was great grace on the part of Christ to him. Peter had made men doubt if he were a true follower. The denial could not be passed over in silence. He was the foremost man among them. It was necessary to go back to the beginning with him, and question him as if he were only a candidate for the ministry, only now for the first time joining the discipleship, and had not loyally followed the Master for years. And the stain and reproach must be wiped out. And Peter would feel intensely relieved that the depth of his denial and unkindness had been really sounded by the plummet of love and power in the hand of his Lord. But then, as three times came the searching question, *Lovest thou me?* three times came the gracious reassuring word of authority, *Feed my sheep*. The Lord desired Peter to be as truly sensible of forgiveness and restoration to apostolic office as of his great sin. After such a denial He does not cast off. After such failure He does not, even if forgiving, put down the disciple to a lower place. He does not even say, I will put you on trial: take a less conspicuous post for a while; He gives back the very place lost; and this is the gospel for every one who is sensible of his sin, and loss and failure through sin, who thinks he must relinquish all hope of working up now, as once he might have done, to the higher level. Jesus forgives and restores; His forgiveness is Divine as Himself. "In the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God," Hos. i. 10. Jesus repeated this question, too, because it is the all-important question for any man, apostle or otherwise, to have pressed home on conscience and heart. Again, and again, and again, in the mercy of God it pursues us, in providence, in grace, in joy, in sorrow, in work, in idleness, in friendship, in solitude, in youth, in age, still this same question, "Lovest thou me?" Happy each one who can whisper into the ear of his Lord, after past service, profession, sacraments, vows, prayers, yes, after failures, and denials, and shameful defeats, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." 17. *He—sheep. Peter was grieved*. It had gone to his very heart that the Master, in presence of the rest, should con-

third time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed  
 18 my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry *thee* whither

sider it needful thus to interrogate *him* of all men. But Jesus was not satisfied until this point was reached. His disciple must feel the sting of the question piercing to the "dividing asunder of soul and spirit." Christ's dealing in love and tenderness is meant to produce sincere repentance, grief, and hatred of our sin; and not till then can we be sure that our love to Christ is growing from a strong and enduring root. The word of Christ is meant to fetch our deepest feelings, to stir us—"all that is within us,"—and then only, when the very lowest stratum is upheaved, is there hope and safety for the future. Lightly somewhat, Simon might answer at the first—more thoughtfully afterwards; but now the point of Christ's sword has at last drawn blood. So must it be with the word that saves our souls. *Grieved*: not angry, not resentful. Simon—the old—might have risen and protested, spoken of all he had done and gone through before for Jesus' sake; was a single fault to be punished so severely? But no; the proud will was broken, as it only can be, by the gentleness which makes us great. *Thou knowest all things*, etc. His heart lay open to the all-seeing eye of his Lord, and on that Divine judgment Peter could rest. The surrender of ourselves, simply and absolutely, to Christ, cannot be without the pain of sacrificing our own judgment of ourselves; we ask to see light in His light; to see our true selves as He sees us; to accept His verdict, and to act upon it; to throw ourselves on His mercy, grace, marvellous knowledge of us, and still more marvellous love. Simon was thoroughly emptied of self, thoroughly broken down, and the love of Christ had done it. It was well that all this should take place in presence of the rest of the apostles. They too had been unfaithful, had fled when Jesus was captured. They too would feel humbled in the humiliation of their representative and foremost man; would feel each one of them as if the question were put to himself, as if each knock was at his own door, not at his neighbour's; each time that searching word came, the answer of Simon would be trembling inarticulately on their own lips; they too would feel lifted up in their brother's lifting up;—for the fall of one brother is the weakness of all;—strong in the assurance of pardon and of restoration, for they too must feed Christ's sheep. In thus restoring Simon Peter, the Lord was making the bond of brotherhood among the disciples, which had been relaxed and strained through Peter's fall, strong and firm again. 18. *Verily—not. Young*: the inference being that Peter was no longer young, but in middle life. But for the explanation which John adds in ver. 19, this utterance of Christ might pass for a proverbial one, possibly alluding to the impulsive self-will of the apostle, and how the discipline of life should tone it down. We should feel, however, that such a word addressed to Simon at such a time was out of keeping with the circumstances, and perhaps somewhat of a commonplace. Jesus foretells at least that this disciple shall be spared to old

19 thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he  
 20 saith unto him, Follow me. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following ; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that  
 21 betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and  
 22 what *shall* this man *do*? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that

age, and that then he shall meet with a violent death. A fitting response to Simon's confession of Christ's omniscience. It was an assurance to him that that omniscience not only read the state of his affections, but also embraced in its scrutiny all Peter's subsequent course of labour and suffering for the kingdom. It was the repetition, in short, of Christ's former word,—warning and encouragement in one,—xiii. 36, "Whither I go thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards." 19. *This spake—me. By what death* (rather, as in R.V., *by what manner of death*). The writer assumes that this was known to his readers. We have now no certain knowledge of the time or place or mode of Peter's death.<sup>1</sup> [With the exception of a passing and general allusion to his death in Clement of Rome, there is not for a century after it must have taken place any historical mention of him. From the end of the second century, however, there flows a steady stream of tradition, testifying to the fact that Peter visited Rome and suffered the martyr's death there under Nero, probably about 64 A.D. Hatch, *Enc. Brit.* art. "Peter," says, "The probabilities of the case are evenly balanced."] *Follow me.* The same call as at the beginning, obedience to which is the sum and substance of present duty. Whatever lies behind or in front, even if such a death, yet Christ shows the way. It is the path of safety, and of life and glory. "If any man serve me, let him follow me : and where I am, there shall also my servant be," ch. xii. 26.

(3.) 20-23. *The future of John.* 20. *Then Peter—thee?* Simon had all a friend's interest and curiosity to know the future of his friend John. The same irrepressible Peter, not sobered into silence by the suggestion of his own end. *Turning about.* A graphic touch from an eye-witness of the scene. *The disciple, etc.* ; see xiii. 23-25. A threefold description is given of John : *Whom Jesus loved ; who leaned on His breast at supper ; who said, Lord, who is he that betrayeth Thee?* Why this heaping up of apparently superfluous characteristics? Possibly the two latter clauses are added to the first, which in itself was enough to mark out the disciple, to show the close intimacy existing between Peter and John ; because it was to John that Peter beckoned on that night in the upper room to ask the Lord who should betray Him. It may be also that it is done with an intention of emphasizing the validity of the evidence of one of whom all this was true, the man to whom the Church is indebted for the incident recorded, and the book of which it is a part. 21. *Peter—do?* lit. *Lord, and this man—what?* 22. *Jesus—me.* The prediction about his own future was intended for practical uses to Simon Peter, as we have seen, not to gratify his curiosity. But mere curiosity being roused, Jesus checks it at once. Not to tell their future fates, but to inspire them with hope, and power, and courage for the great work presently to occupy all their thoughts and energies, was Jesus now with them. *If I*

<sup>1</sup> It is a fair inference from the text that Peter was at the date of writing already dead.

- he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee? follow thou me.
- 23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is*
- 24 *that* to thee? This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things which

*will that he tarry till I come.* Jesus speaks as one who is Lord of life and death, whose will is supreme on earth and in heaven. He also asserts the fact of His second coming. John alone of the apostles, as it appears, survived the destruction of Jerusalem (an event which might be pointed at in the words *till I come*), 70 A.D., before which time he had departed to Ephesus. Christ says: Leave your various destinies in my hand, and do present duty; do *thou* follow me (the pronoun is emphatic); see to it that thou art fulfilling *thy* course well. Follow me, and others shall follow also, Acts i. 7. 23. *Then—thee.* The interpretation put on this saying of Jesus by the brethren was natural exaggeration, making it mean more than was said, and expressed the instinctive desire to construe the conditional remark into a positive and definite statement, to the effect that John should live to see the second coming of his Lord. Of course the belief of the time was that this coming was not so far away. No doubt as the years went on, and all the apostles had gone, and John alone was left, this construction put on Christ's utterance would seem to be receiving verification. The words here are susceptible of the meaning that John was now dead, and the writer was desirous to show that the Lord had not by any means said John should not die. But on the whole the other alternative seems more probable, that John himself is still the writer, and, being anxious to correct the mistaken impression from Christ's words, he carefully states and repeats them.

(4.) **Conclusion**, vers. 24, 25. An addition obviously by another and probably later hand, attesting the identity of the writer of this Gospel with John, and therefore the authenticity of the foregoing record, and the credibility of the writer of it. It is usually ascribed to one, or more, or all, of the elders of the Church at Ephesus. We cannot tell for certain; but that these verses are integral portions of the Gospel is indisputable. 24. *This—true.* Observe the contrast, "*that* disciple" in ver. 23, and "*this* disciple" here. The change of pronoun would appear to argue John's hand as far as ver. 23 at least. *Who testifieth of these things, and wrote these things.* John's apostolic witness to Christ is therefore for us in permanence and in integrity incorporated in his Gospel; cp. xix. 35. The witness is the highest of its kind that of an eye- and ear-witness, Luke i. 2; cp. i John i. 1-4; and in receiving it we are brought into living fellowship with the apostles of Christ, and through them with Christ Himself. We can only reach Christ through apostolic testimony; at the same time, the Holy Spirit who was given to them is also freely given to us if we ask for Him, and He becomes in our hearts, through need, and desire, and instinct, thought, feeling, conscience, an independent witness to the truth as it is in Jesus, declared to us by apostolic men. 25. *And—written*; cp. xx. 30. *I suppose.* Possibly the same hand as in ver. 24. *We know.* The conjoined solemn attestation of the eldership of the Church vouches for the Gospel of John; the individual writer of

Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

these few clauses adds his own opinion of the inexhaustible wealth and significance of each action of the God-man. *Even the world itself could not contain.* A pardonable hyperbole, when one remembers that, according to John's view of Christ, all He did and spoke were *signs* (xx. 30) of the glory, power, nature, life, love, grace, truth of the infinite God. So that the conclusion turns back to the commencement: "The Word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory—glory as of the Only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth," i. 14.

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